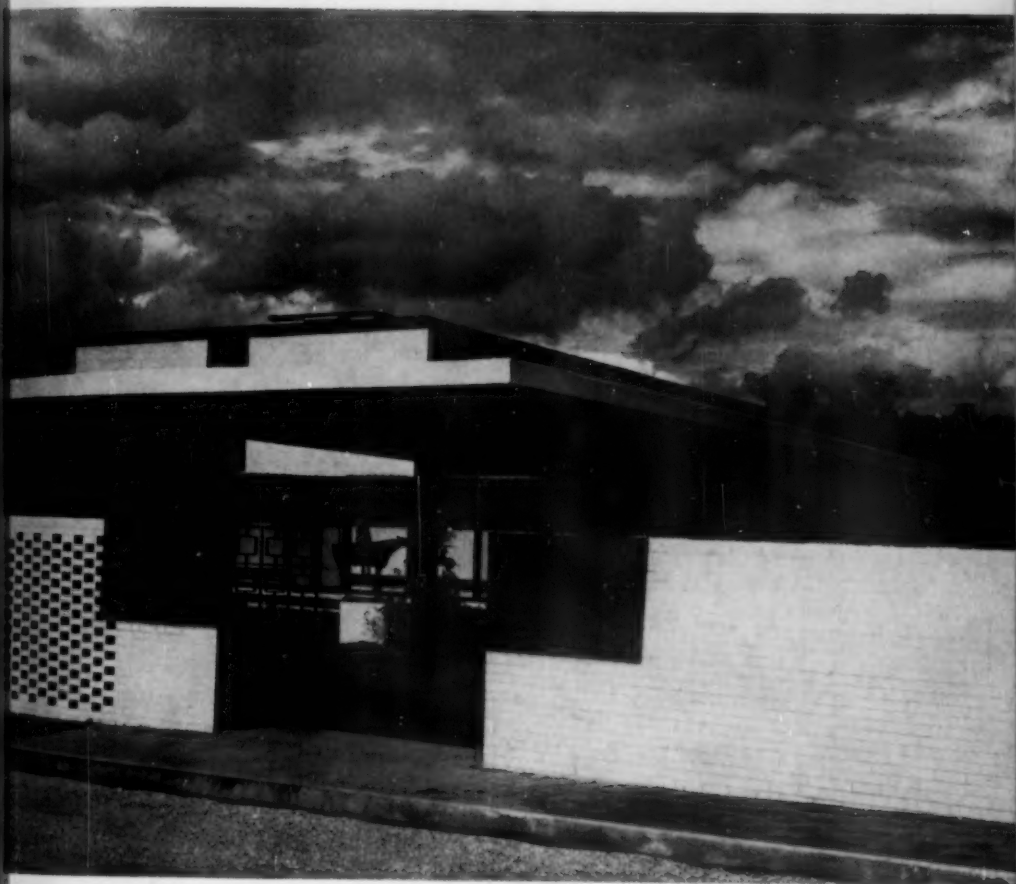


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THE COLLEGE ART JOURNAL is published quarterly by the College Art Association of America at 432 Fourth Ave., New York 16, New York. Two dollars a year, single numbers fifty cents. Entered as second-class matter at the Post Office in New York, New York under the act of March 3, 1879. Additional entry at Menasha, Wisconsin. Printed in the U.S.A.

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At the section on Modern Art in the annual meeting of CAA at Pittsburgh, Jan. 26, 1956, Frederick B. Deknatel of Harvard University brought together four excellent papers, each dealing with French painting at the end of the nineteenth century: Klaus Berger, University of Kansas, "The Pastels of Odilon Redon"; Lincoln F. Johnson, Jr., Goucher College, "Time and Motion in Toulouse-Lautrec"; William Seitz, Princeton University, "Monet and Abstract Painting"; George Heard Hamilton, Yale University, "Cézanne and the Image of Time." CAJ is grateful to the speakers for their permission to publish the four papers as a group (Gordon Washburn's presentation on Fernand Léger at this same session was not a paper but a Kinescope prepared for television).

CÉZANNE, BERGSON AND THE IMAGE OF TIME

George Heard Hamilton

A work of genius which is at first disconcerting may create, little by little, by the simple fact of its presence, a conception of art and an artistic atmosphere which bring it within our comprehension; it will then become in retrospect a work of genius; otherwise it would have remained what it was at the beginning, merely disconcerting.

—HENRI BERGSON,

The Two Sources of Morality and Religion

In the criticism of Cézanne's painting, during his lifetime and subsequently, three stages can be detected. His contemporaries, who saw his work as a reaction to or departure from the immediate past and present, characterized the unexpected aspects of his art with such words as "brutal," "gauche," "childish" and "primitive." These and many more terms of reproach are negative descriptions of characteristics which the next generation of critics, writing soon after Cézanne's death, considered as positive elements of his style. Thus "brutal" lost the sense of "brutish" and became almost synonymous with "rugged," or "powerful." "Primitive" and "childish" were absorbed in the concept of Cézanne as a pioneer or precursor. The supposedly awkward factors in his work, for which such words as "gauche" had seemed appropriate in the 1890's, disappeared in the argument that Cézanne's distortions were essential elements in his achievement of "significant form." Armed with Clive Bell's popular phrase, a third generation of critics undertook the difficult task of explaining the distortions in terms of the abstract formal structure of his work. From about 1910 to 1930,



Cézanne, *La Route Tournante à la Roche-Guyon*. 1885. The Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, Mass. A comparison with a photograph of the motif (see CAJ, Winter, 1956, pp. 107ff.), proves that there are more houses visible in the center of the painting than can be seen from any single point of view. The painting therefore incorporates more than one visual study of space experienced at successive moments in time. Similar changes ("distortions") in the position of the house wall to the left, which was actually parallel to the road, and in the height of the hills in the background, can only be accounted for in the same way.

Cézanne was interpreted as the master of three-dimensional structural expression achieved through his exhaustive scrutiny of forms in space and their presentation in planes of color.

Now, fifty years after the artist's death, we need no longer value him exclusively as the painter who released us from the toils of representational painting nor regard him solely as the source for much abstract art. His work can be examined for what it inherently is: a profound cultural expression historically conditioned by the technical developments and the currents of thought peculiar to his own age, more especially by Cézanne's transformation of Impressionist technique and by such philosophical speculations as may seem to have some relevance to his art. Since Cézanne's work has been so well analyzed in the recent past by scholars thoroughly aware of its unique pictorial properties, I have no wish to recapitulate their findings but rather to see whether a slightly different reading may not disclose new aspects of

his genius. My contention is that when Cézanne's paintings are studied in relation to certain aspects of late nineteenth-century French philosophical speculation, his so-called distortions will be seen to be not so much visual aberrations, or "simply disconcerting" in Bergson's words, but the inevitable result of his manner of working and thinking about space and time.

To begin, we shall have to assume that any work of art which we recognize as of more than passing interest may be related in technique, subject matter or expressed content, to certain aspects of contemporary thought, and that modern works of high seriousness, as Cézanne's certainly are, will contain some reflection of the dominant post-Kantian interest in the nature and experience of space and time. We know that Cézanne came of age, pictorially speaking, within the practice of Impressionism. And if we can speak of a theory of Impressionism, we can describe it as predominantly positivistic in its interpretation of space and time. By this I mean that a typically Impressionist landscape, such as those produced by Monet, Pissarro and Sisley during the 1870's and 1880's is fundamentally a presentation of visual phenomena seen from a given position in space at a certain moment in time. Space is restricted to "the place here" and time to "the moment now" more drastically than in any previous school of painting. The Impressionist painter has chosen to function as an apparatus for registering an impression (in the sense of an effect imprinted on the organs of sight) of objects extended in a space which exists apart from his consciousness, which is inaccessible to human experience. It is positive in the Comtian sense that all effects in such space have had their physical causes therein. A strict Impressionist painting is an accurate demonstration of Auguste Comte's contention that "there is an immutable necessity in the external world . . . an invariable order actually existing without us. . . . All events whatever, the events of our personal and social life included, are always subject to natural relations of sequence and similitude, which in all essential respects lie beyond the reach of our interference." In this subordination of consciousness to space we may see a connection with association psychology in which states of consciousness were explained by reference to the succession of brain states and the causal events connected therewith in the external world as if the order of consciousness corresponded exactly with the order of things in a material sense.

Even in later Impressionism the relation between sensation and phenomena is still held to this strict order of space and time. In Monet's *Cathedrals* (and even in the later *Nymphéas*, although possibly not in the final panoramic versions) each separate painting corresponds to a separate moment in time at a specific location in space. Any sense of continuity between the individual items or among the series as a whole must be contributed by the consciousness of the observer; it has not been communicated by the painter. Despite their extraordinary technical subtlety the *Cathedrals*,

for this spectator at least, are the last even though they may be the finest demonstrations of a point of view toward the representation of space and time which assumes as a fundamental principle that physical nature is all that exists, that it is the limit of experience and knowledge, and that nature is of universal extension, self-contained and determined through and through by the laws of causal necessity.

It follows that in orthodox Impressionism the observer is outside time and space, that he is indeed the observer of events which occur apart from his consciousness. Within the painting all positions are established as a series of intricate but fixed relations to the observer and to each other. Similarly, all these positions exist simultaneously in relation to each other, and with or without the observer. Despite such superficial sensational evidence of time as the description of climate, weather, season of the year and hour of the day, Impressionist space is essentially timeless since it exists only in terms of the instant at which it is observed. The elimination of the human figure is another indication of this, for so pervasive is our curiosity about each other that the presence of even a single person in a painting provokes queries about his or her past and future, and thus expands the concept of momentaneous time into one of extended time. Finally, the composition of Impressionist paintings seems to indicate that the immediate data of perception have been recorded within a conventional, predetermined pictorial order. Whether the view is treated in terms of recessive one- or two-point perspective as in Monet's landscapes of the 1870's and 1880's and in most of Sisley's, or in the panoramic arrangement of Monet's later work, before such paintings the spectator must feel that the limits of the view within the frame have been decided upon before the first brushstroke touched the canvas. Impressionism, if this reading is correct, is thus not only the end point reached by Renaissance realism (as is seen in the persistence of Albertian perspective concepts), but it is the last pictorial realization of a Newtonian timeless space.

Just at the point when such an overriding concern with the nature of visual space might seem to have destroyed the experience of time, a change occurred, pictorially and philosophically speaking. In 1889 with the publication of his *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience* (written 1883-1887), Henri Bergson restored time to a central position in human experience. Indeed, he placed it in the very center of life and of consciousness. For Bergson reality itself was conceived as a temporal or historical process, or at the least as having an essentially temporal character. Now Cézanne through the later 1880's had been developing a new style which is so notably different from previous Impressionism that it has had to be called Post-Impressionist to indicate that there is a chronological as well as qualitative distinction to be made between works by him and those by his fellow Impressionists. Since Impressionism is based on the concept of

instantaneous time in a homogeneous, Newtonian space, and Cézanne's paintings do not seem to present the same experience as do purely Impressionist works, I submit that they must deal with a different attitude toward space and time. This I should like to present as the pictorial equivalent of the Bergsonian concept of space as known only in and through time.

Let us begin with the problem of consciousness. Bergson saw in association psychology an attempt to subject the intensity of sensation to quantitative treatment as if a state of consciousness were of the same sort as a physical fact. None of us, I suppose, needs to be persuaded that our consciousness, whether waking or sleeping, is continuous and that its tempo is so extraordinarily variable that spatialized time (the time of clocks and sidereal movements) has little or no relation to the time we live through. Consciousness itself, being indivisible and continuous, cannot be cut off from the past and the future. Every moment of our conscious life carries with it influences from the past, even as the present reworks these influences in preparation for the future. In these terms there can be no instantaneous present as the Impressionists had seen it, because an instant can only be experienced as a sensation, as an impression, but not as psychic feeling. It cannot contain a memory or prepare an expectation. This extensive kind of consciousness Bergson located in time, but such time was understood as duration rather than as a sequence of successive but separate moments. In duration reality is to be understood as process, continuous becoming, enduring in time, in which memory (whereby we make use of the past) is as potent a factor as hope. My contention is that in certain paintings Paul Cézanne achieved with varying intensity and success the pictorial realization of time as duration rather than as instantaneous succession. If this is so then we may hope to understand the character of his spatial representations in a new way.

Among all the differences which can be seen between a work by Monet of the early 1880's and a landscape by Cézanne of comparable quality and date, one of the least noticed, but perhaps not the least important, is the difference in tempo between the two kinds of painting. By this I mean the several different kinds of time-effects which may be observed. The Monet, for instance, may represent a brilliant day beside the river. A breeze is blowing, water and trees are in movement, a cloud passes across the sun casting half the scene in shade. What is seen is the effect of a moment, for in the next instant a different combination of light, air and water will create a different impression. Brief is the effect and quick must be the method of recording it. Not the least of the charms of Impressionism is the communication of this sense of speed, in observation and representation.

Cézanne, on the other hand, was a very slow worker. Not only did he return to the motif to work on the same painting on successive days, but he observed the motif for long periods at a time. His painting, therefore,

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is the record of an intense optical experience through an extended length of time. This is in marked contrast to Impressionist practice which required the development of a wonderfully dexterous handling in order to record as quickly as possible the appearance of a given motif at one particular moment. Necessarily, if speed is of the essence, the sense of space must be communicated by a stable perspective system. With Cézanne, on the contrary, space is not given as such, once and for all as a timeless substance, but is gradually discovered as and in duration, in a process of becoming which involves memory, the memory of successive experiences of space. If this is so, then in contrast to an Impressionist painting in which the surface is the sum of all the visual sensations received at one instant and recorded as quickly as possible, the entire pictorial surface of a Cézanne is the sum of continuous perceptions of space in the mode of time.

If the surface of a painting by Cézanne is the record of cumulative visual experiences recorded at successive but different moments or periods in time, it follows that these experiences need not all have occurred from one and the same physical position in space. Even in the studio to return to the same subject on another day is to see it under different conditions no matter how slight the degree. Another consequence will follow. Lines, angles, and planes which in a conventional perspective system define the position of a form in a fixed motionless space will exhibit abnormalities, discrepancies or structural deformities with reference to the traditional appearance of the same form in a conventional spatial system. These structural discrepancies, Cézanne's so-called distortions, have often been explained as the consequences of his attempt to recreate his sensations of deep, three-dimensional space on a two-dimensional surface. At other times notice has been taken of the multiple points of view from which his objects have been observed. But even when these two demonstrable factors have been taken into account, little attention has been paid to the quality of the space in which they occur. Thus most diagrams and verbal dissections of Cézanne's paintings have tended, through the very nature of the process, to reduce his compositions to a timeless two-dimensional patterned space. If we can go so far as to say that actual three-dimensional space, which we must enter and move within in order to experience it at all, necessarily includes the experience of time, then it is possible that time is necessarily a component element in Cézanne's representation of space, and that it can be restored to his work if we are willing to bring together the two aspects which have been separated in criticism, the realization that his distortions are related to his concern for deep space and the fact that the multiple points of view, which are durational in the painter's own experience, are the means by which he arrives at a profounder visual expression of such space. This is to say that if the forms (whether of still life or landscape) have been seen from different positions in space, they can only have been so observed at different



Cézanne: *The Basket of Apples*, 1890-1894, Art Institute of Chicago. The objects have been observed from at least four major positions (the table from either end; the basket and bottle; the apples on the cloth; the biscuits) but there are other minor and shifting angles of vision. The table, for instance, is "distorted" only if an attempt is made to embrace both ends in a single glance. Its otherwise inexplicable fracture beneath the cloth is comprehensible and visually logical when observed as a temporal sequence related to all the objects upon it.

moments in time, the time of the indivisible continuous consciousness of the artist.

The difficulty which the elimination of time incurs for the observer is seen when the multiple points of view are removed to the exterior of the painting, whether in the course of a logical analysis in the presence of the actual work or in the examination of a two-dimensional diagram. The spectator is faced with the impossible task of trying to comprehend visually the various foci in a single glance. He is thus driven to an expressive explanation of the distortions. Whether he assumes that they are the result of personal decisions on the part of the artist, ultimately inexplicable in psychological terms, or that they are due to the painter's architectonic concerns they remain fundamentally subjective and illogical. But if these points of view are returned to the painting, in the sense that they are imaginatively

gathered up again within the consciousness of the artist and spectator, and the painting is considered as much an image of temporal as of spatial experience, then the discrepancies become truths of experiential vision.

To apprehend this the spectator, in his examination of a Cézanne, must proceed slowly and continuously. He must recreate on a shorter scale the artist's experience by shifting his own position from side to side and moving back and forth in front of the painting until he comes to feel that his process of viewing is, if even in the slightest degree, a repetition of the process of creation. If we re-enact in this fashion the artist's experience, continuous through time in space, then the painting will be seen as an image of time since we shall have found that it cannot be comprehended as an image of a simple, single discrete experience of space. The distortions are formal discrepancies only when considered as descriptions of fixed forms; they become coherent when apprehended as records of the changing relationships of object to object recorded by the continuous but changing consciousness of the observer. In consequence all of Cézanne's work must be thought of as part of a process, of a becoming. There could be no "finished" signed and dated masterpieces in this process which being in itself incomplete prohibited the artist from ceasing at any given point.

To return to my original hypothesis, if a great work of art may be more fully understood when examined in terms of that contemporary philosophical system which sustains it and to which it contributes, we must, I believe, consider Cézanne's work as comparable and parallel to that system with which it has the most analogies, namely Bergson's. This relationship has not played a very large part in previous art criticism, although Bergson's theories are believed to have been fruitful for such literary expression as Marcel Proust's. The neglect of Bergson in the criticism of Cézanne may be explained by the concern of most twentieth-century critics to justify Cézanne's distortions on grounds applicable to and justifiable by the conditions of Cubism and abstract art, but it must also be due to Bergson's own neglect of systematic aesthetics. The few pages which he devoted to the subject in *Le Rire* (1900), and which are widely known through T. E. Hulme's analysis in his *Speculations*, are interesting but they scarcely amount to a workable system and are principally important as a further affirmation of Bergson's belief in the priority of intuition over intellect.

The Bergsonian equivalence of intuition with the immediate perception of reality has occasionally been taken to confer a Bergsonian character on Impressionism considered as the record of moments wherein reality has finally been intuitively grasped. But this is just what, in my opinion, Impressionism does not do, since reality for Bergson as duration is continuous becoming in time, and for the Impressionists it is the separate moment. When the Impressionists fixed reality as an instantaneous static image they violated the primary element of Bergsonian thought. On the other hand,

if we recall Cézanne's words about the difficulties he experienced in "realizing his sensations," we may believe that his trouble arose, not from trying to set down his impressions in the narrow sense, but rather from the more exhausting struggle to record, in all their intensity, immediacy and purity, the sensations which are really to be thought of as Bergsonian intuitions, as the "immediate data of consciousness."

There are parallels between Cézanne's and Bergson's remarks which suggest that we are dealing with two ways of saying much the same thing. The philosopher was so much more articulate that the painter is heard at a disadvantage, but two statements by Cézanne may be read in conjunction with one of Bergson's definitions. On May 12, 1904, Cézanne wrote Emile Bernard: "I proceed very slowly, because nature appears very complex to me and unremitting effort is required. One must look at the model carefully and feel very exactly, and then express oneself with distinction and power." And on September 8, 1906, he wrote to his son: "I must tell you that as a painter I am becoming more clear-sighted in the presence of nature, but that for me the realization of my sensations is always very painful. I cannot achieve the intensity developed by my senses." We may take these as empirical paraphrases of Bergson's statement that "art has no other object than to brush aside the utilitarian symbols, the conventional and accepted generalities, in short everything which veils reality from us, in order to bring us face to face with reality itself." (*Le Rire*).

You may ask whether there is any evidence that Cézanne was aware of Bergson's speculations, especially of his theory of intuition as the surest approach to reality which can only be known in and through duration, or that Bergson had ever examined Cézanne's paintings? So far as I can discover there is no such evidence. If we can trust the recollections of Joachim Gasquet, Cézanne was even impatient with philosophical speculation. Nevertheless, we cannot ignore these facts: Cézanne was well educated, all his life he read books of current interest, principally fiction, and he was deeply religious. Putting these aspects of his experience and personality together we can assume that speculative thought was not entirely foreign to his nature (as we might consider it so with Monet or Renoir).

As for Bergson, when he was at work on his first important treatise, the *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience*, Cézanne's works were not to be seen in Paris. Bergson's *Matière et mémoire*, a searching study of the means, namely memory, by which existence is made continuous, appeared in 1896, the year after Cézanne's work was first shown extensively by Ambroise Vollard. *L'Evolution créatrice*, Bergson's most influential treatise, was published the year after Cézanne's death. This correspondence of research, publication and pictorial achievement seems to me as impressive an indication of philosophical and artistic parallelism as would be provided

by more concrete evidence that Cézanne had read Bergson or that Bergson had visited Cézanne's exhibitions. Rather let us take as an example in *L'Evolution créatrice*, a passage in which Bergson discusses the constantly changing state of consciousness in terms of the observation of external objects, and see if it does not bear some relation to Cézanne's treatment of landscape. Bergson wrote: "I say that I change, but the change seems to me to reside in the passage from one state to the next: of each state, taken separately I am apt to think that it remains the same, during all the time that it prevails. Nevertheless, a slight effort of attention would reveal to me that there is no feeling, no idea, no volition which is not undergoing change every moment: if a mental state ceased to vary, its duration would cease to flow. Let us take the most stable of internal states, the visual perception of a motionless external object. The object may remain the same, I may look at it from the same side, at the same angle, in the same light; nevertheless the vision I now have of it differs from that which I have just had, even if only because the one is an instant older than the other. My memory is there which conveys something of the past into the present. My mental state, as it advances on the road of time, is continually swelling with the duration which it accumulates: it goes on increasing—rolling upon itself, as a snowball on the snow. Still more is this the case with states more deeply internal, such as sensations, feelings, desires, etc., which do not correspond, like a simple visual perception, to an unvarying external object. But it is expedient to disregard this uninterrupted change, and to notice it only when it becomes sufficient to impress a new attitude on the body, a new direction on the attention. Then, and then only, we find that our state has changed. The truth is that we change without ceasing, and that the state itself is nothing but change."

Bergson persuades us that the consciousness of even the most motionless observer is constantly undergoing change. How much more so then, must a painting of Cézanne's be the record of change in duration, of space seen in the mode of time, when we know not only that Cézanne shifted his position, as in his paintings of still life, from place to place, but that he was aware of the variety of visual experience available even to the stationary observer. In this letter to his son of September 8, 1906, he wrote: "Here on the river bank motifs are more frequent, the same subject seen from a different angle, suggests a subject for study of the greatest interest, and so varied that I think I could keep busy for months without changing my place, just by leaning at one time more to the right and at another more to the left."

From such a statement and from the visual experience of his paintings, I conclude that Cézanne's greatest works differ essentially, in their profoundest intention, from those of his contemporaries among the Impressionists. The latter are descriptions of static space seen instantaneously;

Cézanne's are records of the experience of continuous movement through space in time. For this observer Cézanne's paintings "change without ceasing," and the painter himself was the first modern artist to create an image of time.

Bibliographical Note

The reader who wishes to pursue this interpretation further will find Meyer Schapiro's *Cézanne* (New York, Harry N. Abrams, 1952) the most useful recent study in English with good reproductions. Erle Loran's *Cézanne's Composition* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2nd edition, 1950) contains many pertinent diagrams and comparative analyses of paintings with photographs of the motifs. Mme. Liliane Brion-Guerry has made an important contribution to the study of Cézanne's spatial constructions in her *Cézanne et l'expression de l'espace* (Paris, Flammarion, 1950). A discussion of Cézanne in the light of modern philosophy will be found in Forrest Williams's "Cézanne and French Phenomenology," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. XII, No. 4, 1954, pp. 481-492. Charles W. Hendel's "The Achievement of Bergson" (*University of Toronto Quarterly*, Vol. X, 1940-1941, pp. 268-282) is an excellent brief summary of Bergson's philosophy. I have incorporated several of Professor Hendel's remarks in my own text practically verbatim. The quotations from Bergson will be found in the standard English translations: on page 75 of the *Two Sources* by R. Ashley Audra and Cloudesley Brereton (Doubleday Anchor Books, 1954), and on pages 3-4 of *Creative Evolution* by Arthur Mitchell (The Modern Library, n.d.).

On Cézanne's Portrait of His Wife in the Garden

*As with Sophocles, she wears a mask—
But we will know her. The mask is one
Not meant to bide.*

*This balance is
Forever; and the line (how much
Disturbed—strength seeks here
Solidness that rock itself imparts
To its Familiar)—it sets us firm
Within the Garden (see, the tree
Is there, and the rounded flowers yield
The sinful smell). Here is The Woman.*

Howard Fussiner

TIME AND MOTION IN TOULOUSE-LAUTREC

Lincoln F. Johnson, Jr.

In 1881, the year before Toulouse-Lautrec began his formal training in the studio of Léon Bonnat, Eadweard Muybridge had displayed his photographic studies of human and animal motion to an assemblage that included, among others, Meissonier, Gérôme, and Lautrec's future teacher, Bonnat, himself.¹ The event marks the culmination of that association of art with objective cognition that had begun in the Renaissance. Science and art had met and henceforward, presumably, an artist—if he wanted to—would be able to represent even the most complex human and animal movements, confident in the absolute versimilitude of his imagery. More than reflecting the general character of a tradition which had insisted on the primacy of the object, however, Muybridge's demonstration serves as an appropriate symbol of a special interest in motion that manifests itself in innumerable ways in the last thirty years of the century: in the University of Pennsylvania's subsidizing Muybridge's investigations; in Degas' analyses of dancers and horses; in the development of the shadow theater and the motion picture; and, for that matter, in Frederick Taylor's application of time and motion studies to industrial production. Lautrec shares the interest of his contemporaries. Critics have frequently noted his preoccupation with the human in motion. Some have seen in it an expression of his preoccupation with his own infirmities, an impassioned wistfulness fulfilled on paper and canvas. For Lautrec's work and for the history of art, however, there is something more significant than vicarious fulfillment in his ways of generating movement in static forms. The tradition represented by Muybridge's investigations and by Bonnat's, Gérôme's and Meissonier's painting had solved the problem of representing human and animal motion by creating an image of a body fixed in a position which described the action of a particular moment and sometimes suggested, as the culmination of a phase, the past and future of the movement as well. Lautrec's most interesting representations of the human being in motion constitute a prophetic break with that tradition. We can best see what he accomplished if we compare his work with that of Degas; for Degas, in addition to being Lautrec's best known artistic progenitor and the artist to whom Lautrec is most often compared, is the most progressive member of the older generation in his modes of expressing movement and provides, therefore, a good base from which we can measure Lautrec's peculiar characteristics.

For Degas as well as for the Academy, the representation of movement

¹ Robert Taft, "Eadweard Muybridge and His Work," in Eadweard Muybridge, *The Human Figure in Motion* (New York: Dover Publications, 1955), vii-xiv.



Fig. 1. Toulouse-Lautrec: *La Goulue*, lithograph, 1894, Art Institute of Chicago.

is essentially a display of muscular and skeletal action, a rendering of the disposition of the parts of the body in space. He is fascinated not merely by the general character of the movement but by the intricate structural relations that are involved: the relation of head to neck to shoulder to arms; the exact angle the hand makes with respect to the wrist and the forearm; the distance in depth from the most forward point to the most distant; the character of the skeletal support, muscular action and fatty tissue. To the very end of his career he was to depend on the model and to develop his pictures from the study of the nude in action. Lautrec on the other hand, ignoring problems of proportion, ponderation and articulation, liberated shapes and lines from their descriptive function, sometimes robbing the figure of all anatomical logic and three-dimensional substance. In the lithograph of *la Goulue* and *Valentin* dancing (fig. 1), the figures are conceived as flat. La

Goulue's left shoulder is twisted parallel to the plane of the picture and the line within the contours is suppressed, except where it contributes to the balance of the design. A sort of negative modelling is used, so that the edges which would normally be thought of as distant—such as Valentin's shoulder—are strengthened to bring them into the plane. La Goulue's back is broken. Lautrec is very conscious of the two-dimensional space of the picture plane, which requires that any representation of movement, whether from front to rear or from side to side, be represented as a displacement in a single plane. Emphasis on what is taking place within the contour of the plane, movement of flesh, sinew, muscle, and skeleton, play of light and dark, action of drapery, can only detract from the action of the contour and weaken the effect of movement that the contour creates. Thus the peculiar kind of dematerialization and distortion, the emphasis on the contour, the silhouette, and the plane.

In short Degas worked with volumes; Lautrec worked with planes. Once this difference in form is perceived a difference in content manifests itself clearly and positively: Degas depicted the human being in motion; Lautrec created a figure for the motion itself. Capable of comprehending immediately a complex movement and setting it down in fluid line or simple shape, Lautrec developed a sort of everchanging pictorial shorthand which had only slight reference to ordinary visual experience. The body as he drew it is not the body as it exists or even as it is seen; it is the body transformed into a graphic sign which possesses an inherent suggestive force. If we mask the figures of Goulue and Valentin above the waist they lose all appearance of corporeality, become merely a schematic diagram of a movement in a surface pattern of line. Remove the specific references to the man in the poster for Caudieux (D.346)² and the contour and shape retain their vitality, the sprightly skipping movement continues. Mme. Natanson, in the poster for *La Revue Blanche* (fig. 2) skates without legs . . . and for that matter, without ice.

When we examine some of the ways in which Lautrec expresses the movement of such figures it is remarkable how often the legs are cut off or absconded or left inarticulate. We may see this as a manifestation of Lautrec's psychic reaction to his own stunted legs, but far more important is the fact that he managed to express the movement convincingly through the shape, its angle of inclination, its position in the picture plane, even by the elements of the picture surrounding it. In *Femme au plateau* from the series *Elles* (D.181), the lady moves to the left. But what are the indications of movement? Certainly not the action of the limbs or torso, but rather a complex of visual ideas which have little intrinsically to do with the figure. First of all the

² The letter "D" refers to Loys Delteil, *Le peintre-graveur illustré*, Vols. X and XI: *H. de Toulouse-Lautrec* (Paris: Chez l'auteur, 1920).



Fig. 2. Toulouse-Lautrec: *La Revue Blanche*, lithographed poster, Baltimore Museum of Art.

contour swells like a sail in the direction of the movement; second, the dark accents tend to be distributed to the left away from the center; third, the axis of the overall shape tilts toward the left; fourth, the lines of the floor incline sharply to contrast forcibly with the figure; finally, less important motives like the line of the neck, the pointing of the hands, the almost arrowlike shape created by hands and tray, reinforce the movement. Despite all the evidence to the contrary one might be inclined to think that the movement resulted primarily from the spectator's awareness of the narrative implications were it not for the fact that if the girl in the bed is eliminated the expression of movement becomes even more forceful because the opposition of the listed elements to the stabilizing vertical of the frame is strengthened. The extent to which the abstract relationships contribute to the idea of movement is particularly clear when one compares *Femme au plateau* with *Femme au lit* (D.187), in which the stability is apparent in the vertical mass and accented axis.

Lautrec is almost always more conservative in his painting than in his prints, yet in the painting, too, the same fundamental method prevails. In *Au Moulin Rouge, la Goulue entrant*, 1892 (Collection of Mr. and Mrs. David Levy, New York), for example, volume scarcely exists either in

solid or in void, the architectural background serving merely as a counterfoil to the figures in the foreground, whose substance is reduced to two-dimensional planes, the modulations of which provide a tonal texture rather than sculptural form. The mobile dehanchement of the professional provocateuse impresses itself on us, but there is no movement in the body because there is no body to move, merely lines and transparent planes. The idea of motion is conveyed by the shifts of shape and line, by the angles of the décolletage and by the tensions between the angles and the shapes to which they are juxtaposed.

As an example of the manner in which shape symbolizes movement and as a hint of the range of effects which can be achieved through variations on a simple basic shape, we may consider what is probably the most characteristic movement of the restless peripatetic society which Lautrec depicted and of which he formed a part, the walking movement, particularly in the women, whose voluminous skirts and trains provide an opportunity not merely for easily reducing the volume to the plane and a complicated congeries of shapes into a single unit, but also for infinite variations on a simple basic shape. In all the examples which follow aspects descriptive of three-dimensional volume are minimized, external contour is emphasized and the forms simplified to a shape that is roughly triangular. In *Repos entre deux tours de valse*, 1891 (present location unknown), the bowed axis of the overall shape, the relative parallelism of the skirt edge and the floor, combined with the trailing character of the shape, all help to suggest the slow march of the dancers between numbers. In contrast, is the picture of Jane Avril in the background of *Deux valseuses*, 1892 (Gallery of Modern Art, Prague); the double curve of the axis of the figure and the rise of the curve of the edge of the skirt so that it suggests a blunted arrowhead, both lend a more rapid and purposive air to her work, while a bustling quality, the rapid mechanical action of the individual, is here suggested by the similarity of shape and attitude in skirt and feet, which is almost like a futuristic repetition of form, showing a sequential displacement of space. In the poster *Babylone d'Allemagne* (D.351) a similar rapid, forward motion appears, now somewhat more smooth and floating, a series of roughly concentric arcs taking the place of the characteristic foot in the previous example. The floating movement is expressed in the smooth, somnolent stateliness of the chate-laine in *le Tocsin* (D.357), by the complete parallelism of skirt and ground—which is emphasized by the extension of the line of the skirt to the rear—while a slow pace is suggested by the verticality of the forward edge, which resists the slight forward movement implied by the pointing of the contour at the bottom. This last area is particularly interesting, for if it serves as a means of representing the three-dimensional character of the figure by foreshortening, it also provides a forward-searching point. *Cecy Loftus* (D.116) offers a quite different quality of movement, which one can almost duplicate,



Fig. 3. Toulouse-Lautrec: *Messalina*, oil painting, 1900, collection of Mr. and Mrs. George Gard de Sylva, Los Angeles County Museum.

one suspects, on the basis of the character and disposition of the shapes, a long stride punctuated by an exaggerated emphasis on the change from one leg to the other. The jaunty movement, which involves the smooth forward motion of the legs and the hesitation in the torso, is conveyed by the relatively stable triangle of the overall shape and the asymmetric punctuation of the accented head, hand, cane and extended feet. Finally, consider *Messalina*, 1900 (fig. 3), who descends the stair in a movement directed, like that of the falling figure in *Guernica*, by the inclination of the axis of the shape; but here the movement is retarded by the bluntness of the angle and the slightly sidewise displacement of the foot.



Fig. 4. Toulouse-Lautrec: *Histoires Naturelles: La Pintade* (guinea hen), lithograph, 1899, Art Institute of Chicago.

Movement implies time. The movement of a body from one location in space to another implies the lapse between the initiation of the movement and its culmination, and, with respect to complex actions of the human being, it implies a change of attitude in part or all of the body. Like the representation of movement, the expression of the passage of time constitutes an obvious problem for the realist tradition. And just as there is continued interest in the problem of representing space and movement, so there is interest in breaking down the absolute unity of time, place and action that the realist tradition implies. Perhaps there are hints of this interest in the numerous pictorial series at the end of the century, the sunflowers of van Gogh, the haystacks, poplars, cathedrals, and waterlilies of Monet, the cathedrals of Sisley. Admittedly, however, there is some danger of confusion here, for the representation of a variety of views of an object does not necessarily imply an interest in the continuous sequence that they may be capable of representing. But in Degas and, so too, in Lautrec, there is evident an effort to overcome the limitations of the instantaneous point of view. Degas, in addition to capturing the figure in a position which expressed movement, recorded the development of the movement in space and time by presenting a synopsis of the phases of the movement. In the *Four Dancers*, c.1899 (Chester Dale Collection, National Gallery of Art), for example, the dancers, all engaged in adjusting their straps, act almost as one dancer turning in space and fixing one strap after the other. Lautrec does something like this in *La Pintade* (fig. 4), which provides a complete developmental cycle of the alternately protruded and retracted head of the hen as it walks. In Degas' *Before the Ballet*, 1888 (Widener Collection, National Gallery of Art), the phases of the movement are confined to one figure. The two legs of the seated



Fig. 5. Toulouse-Lautrec: *Miss Loie Fuller*, lithograph, 1893, Art Institute of Chicago.

dancer mark the beginning and end of the movement while the arc of the skirt delineates the path. Similarly, Lautrec in the *Yvette Guilbert* series (D.86 and 96, for example), several times places the dark accents of the gloves in such positions that they suggest the first and last phases of the continuous movement. There is a difference in the Lautrec and the Degas, however, in the amount of information provided. Degas graphs the whole movement and insists on the continuity; Lautrec shows the terminal points only and depends on the tension between them to express movement.

On one occasion, in *Miss Loie Fuller* (fig. 5), probably the most completely abstract and prophetic work of the fin-de-siècle, Lautrec succeeded in expressing the change in appearance of the dancer over a period of time quite

literally. Comparison of the print with the photographs, drawings and sketches³ reveals the extent to which the abstraction was sought out and the way in which spatial extension was minimized in favor of a shape that in every way is like a shape by Arp or Miro except that it was made by Lautrec. The flamelike movement of the scarf, swelling, contracting, and undulating, is succinctly summarized in the very character of the shape, in its active contour, in the suggestion of opposing axes within the single form. Up to this point, however, any change is merely metaphorical; the image remains essentially static until the observer invests it with life or perceives the potentiality of movement in it. In some proofs, however, Lautrec sprinkled silver or gold paint over the ink. The metallic colors were popular among the decorators and commercial artists of the time, a testimony, perhaps, of the impact of oriental arts other than the Japanese prints. *International Studio* of the period is full of gold. There is gold in posters, and gold appeared as well not only in Whistler's Peacock Room but also in the lambent glass of the *art nouveau* designers and in the works of *Jugendstil* artists like Klimt. Even the yellows which appear in the backgrounds of a number of Gauguin's pictures are patently imitations of gold. So far as I know gold appears in Lautrec's work, significantly, only this once, when its appearance is peculiarly suited to the subject, when it creates the possibility of a virtual extension of the movement of the shape into time as the angle of incidence of the light is changed on the surface of the print, conveying the fluctuations of the scarf dance, heightening the flamelike appearance of both dance and print. *Miss Loie Fuller* thus is prophetic of the 20th century not merely in its similarity to the free forms of Arp and Miro, but also in its exploitation of the kind of fluctuating, shifting relationships one experiences in analytical cubism.

We could multiply the examples of the way in which Lautrec expresses movement, but the point in the end would be no clearer, for it is a relatively simple one: Lautrec is stripping the pictorial image of its superfluous references to the object, transforming object into a simple, abbreviated, concentrated, evocative symbol. Movement inheres in the energy of shapes and lines and tones and in the tensions among them rather than in the action of the figure represented. Given this point of view the abstract pattern can become more important than the object represented and the inanimate can be as mobile as the animat. So the gloves on the cover of the album of Yvette Guilbert (D.79) become more active than the lady herself and the edge of the stalls in *Petite loge* (D.209) assume a validity apart from the objects they represent. Sometimes Lautrec's manipulation of the object is so free he seems to have lost control, as if the lines and shapes had asserted themselves, wriggled free and followed their own inclination, reminding one of the comment Lautrec had made to Etienne Devisme in his youth: "Je ne sas si vous

³ A photograph of Miss Loie Fuller dancing can be seen in *Art News Annual* (1951), 111.



Fig. 6. Toulouse-Lautrec: *Jane Avril*, lithographed poster, Baltimore Museum of Art.

maîtrisez votre plume, mais, quand mon crayon marche, il faut le laisser aller ou patratras! . . . plus rien."⁴ So in the poster for Jane Avril (fig. 6), the viol thrusts forth a shoot which runs around the picture in a manner recalling the sperm that courses around Munch's *Madonna*, and creates a margin within a margin, a subtle inversion of the shape of Jane Avril's skirt, or, for that matter, a counterpart of her whole body. We are hard put to rationalize this running shoot as an object. It is itself, a frame made part of the picture, a shape with only a shape's relation to other shapes. If we are on the threshold of cubism in the print of Loie Fuller, here we are on the threshold of pure abstraction.

⁴ Letter to Etienne Devisme, October 1881, quoted in Maurice Joyant, *Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, 1864-1901* (Paris: H. Floury, Editeur, 1926) I, 49-50.

THE PASTELS OF ODILON REDON

Klaus Berger

This fall will certainly provide the opportunity of sizing up another key figure among the founders of modern art with the definitely announced Odilon Redon exhibition at the *Orangerie*. For with the exception of one occasion in 1926,¹ too early for critical appraisal within a general pattern, there has never been a public one-man-show of this artist, never an attempt to display the different aspects of his art at once and on a larger scale. This is not to say that Redon is a forgotten figure. His writings on art² rank with those of Delacroix and Fromentin; they have found their place in the best anthologies³ and it is his graphic *oeuvre* indeed by which he has entered art history. The three studies in book form devoted to his life and art, the basic but uncritical information by Mellerio,⁴ the smaller monograph by Charles Fegdal,⁵ and the most recent psycho-analytically oriented study by Sven Sandström,⁶ all are almost exclusively given over to the exploration of his strangely fascinating creatures which exist in a time-less no-man's land. But even if the creation of this fantastic realm conceived in black and white, according to Degas the darkest black that any artist was able to achieve, even if this determines his artistic caliber it is only part of his work, to be more explicit only the first half.

It is too often overlooked that Redon, beginning in the middle nineties underwent a complete change in subject matter, mood, treatment, technique, style, personality and that the production of these later years covers a period about equal in time and size to the earlier lithographs.

The second Redon will be, I dare say, the great revelation of this coming Paris exhibition. It is Redon, the surprising colorist, the creator of significant form and composition, a sharer in the post-impressionist style that by now is so well explored in the figures of Cézanne, Gauguin, Seurat, van Gogh. It is in his pastels that this aspect of Redon can be studied best. In

¹ Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs.

² *A Soi-même, Journal*, Paris, 1922.

Lettres d'Odilon Redon, Paris, 1923.

Recueil de lettres à Emile Bernard, Tonnerre, 1926.

³ Du Colombier, Pierre, *Les plus beaux écrits des grands artistes*, Paris, (1946).

Goldwater, Robert and Marco Treves, *Artists on Art*, N.Y., (1945).

Lhote, André, *De la Palette à l'Ecrivoire*, Paris, (1946).

⁴ Mellerio, André, *Odilon Redon, Peintre, Dessinateur et Graveur*, Paris, 1923.

⁵ Fegdal, Charles, *Odilon Redon*, Paris, 1929.

⁶ Sandström, Sven, *Le monde imaginaire d'Odilon Redon, Etude iconologique*, Lund, (1955).



Fig. 1. Maurice Denis: *Hommage à Cézanne*, 1901, Louvre.

this country we are fortunate in having a great number of these works. Ever since the *Armory Show* in 1913 devoted a full room to Redon, including many pastels, American collectors have followed suit and it is certainly much easier to see an original here than in France. The Museum of Modern Art⁷ and those in Chicago,⁸ Cleveland,⁹ and Palm Beach¹⁰ have not only held exhibitions to include Redon's later works but they have some of the finest examples on permanent view. Quite a number could be located in private American collections that were never mentioned in any of the three monographs. The same holds true for those from collections in Holland, Switzerland, and Germany. Another group has, for the time being at least, disappeared in Belgium. And in view of the fact that the Louvre possesses only three of these pastels filed away in the *Cabinet des dessins*, it is perhaps more easily understandable why the writers of the Redon studies from the Paris perspective could have skipped so easily over this whole group of works,

⁷ *Exhibition Lautrec—Redon*. February 1—March, 1931. Catalogue by Jere Abbot.

⁸ *Paintings, Pastels and Drawings by Odilon Redon*. December 27, 1928 to January 27, 1929.

⁹ *The Twentieth Anniversary Exhibition*. June 26 to October 4, 1936.

¹⁰ Society of the Four Arts, *Odilon Redon*. March 18 to April 3, 1955.

although some of the finest are still in French private collections.

As an artist the earlier Redon was like all fantastic visionaries an isolated figure. He is known to be the illustrator of his own dreams, prompted by Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Flaubert's *Tentation de Saint Antoine* and the text of the Apocalypse, and thus more related to and better understood by the writers and critics who formed the nucleus of the symbolist movement: Mellerio, Huysmans, Mallarmé. To be a specialist of mysterious imagination as well as of graphic expression is the stamp imposed on him. Only after the literary symbolism passed its peak, around 1895, the hour struck for Redon to throw off the literary ballast, turn into a more universal artist and to take up closer contact with the artistic movements of his own time. The painting by Maurice Denis, *Hommage à Cézanne*, of 1901,¹¹ (fig. 1) is a record of this new trend in his art. Surrounded by members of the *Nabi* group (Edouard Vuillard, Denis himself, Paul Sérusier, Paul Ranson, K-X Roussel, Pierre Bonnard, Marthe Denis) and the dealer Ambroise Vollard one sees Odilon Redon in the most conspicuous spot admiring a Cézanne still life which, incidentally, was owned by Gauguin. Gauguin who by that time had left Europe for good is really missed in this company for his relations with Redon, relations of mutual influence, seem to be one of keys, at least, to the latter's conversion in style.

Gauguin's outlook for corresponding signs between inner and outer reality, the seeking for "synthesis," had by this time turned into an aesthetic key word to indicate emancipation from naturalist as well as poetic guidance. Not to illustrate nature nor thought any longer was the aim of this generation but to build up visual equivalents potent enough to carry an imagination that would reach from the natural to the spiritual and set up this other invisible realm *parallel* to the visible. Thus the romantic as well as the impressionist inheritance was to be coped with and, at the same time, to be overcome in order to reach the basis of the coming Expressionism, be it the Northern species or *Fauvism* or *Surrealism*.

In the comparison of similar subjects by Courbet¹² and Redon¹³ (fig. 2) the former in his space conception, color, light and design follows nature in every detail, whereas the latter demonstrates how color can be liberated from imitation and hence increase in expressive intensity. The space illusion is almost eliminated and thus the whole emphasis thrown on those flat areas of color, pure color it is, floating in a dream-like existence and yet phosphorescent and filled with metallic precision and sonority. There is not one source of light and no shadow indeed, no small interplay of light and dark but an intense luminosity all over, as strange as it is unreal, transparent and

¹¹ Paris, Musée National de l'Art Moderne.

¹² *Flowers at the foot of a tree*, 1862, Paris, P. Rosenberg collection.

¹³ *Vase of flowers*. Pastel. New York, Museum of Modern Art, Gift of William S. Paley.



Fig. 2. Redon: *Vase of Flowers*, pastel, 1916?
Museum of Modern Art.

coming, it seems, from somewhere in front, to give additional weight to those juxtaposed colors in their abstract purely rhythmical arrangement. Another element pointing in the same direction is the arabesque-like design, the decorative quality of plastic signs, the distortion that on the one hand cuts off the links to photographic reality, on the other hand makes for a stronger synthesis between coloristic and linear pattern. Here a world is turning up from which man feels himself excluded forever and which, at the same time, in the words of Charles Sterling, "is the testimony of the candid contact of the soul with heavenly regions."¹⁴ The *Three Blue Vases*¹⁵ from the van der Heydt collection may show what a wide variety of expression a similar theme can warrant, how a larger reference to objects of our tangible world, the *three vases*, is counterbalanced by a stronger abstraction

¹⁴ *La Nature Morte de l'Antiquité à nos Jours*. Paris, 1952. p. 108. My translation.

¹⁵ Reproduced in Sterling, *La Nature morte*. pl. 98.

in color and arabesque. The last two works are mature accomplishments from the very last years of Redon's activity. In the *Flowers* from the Beuningen collection, a painting, by the way, not a pastel, one can realize how at an earlier stage the elements of flatness and distortion are coming in and being used in a much cruder way, no doubt under the influence of Gauguin whose work was not unfamiliar to Redon. Incidentally it was Madame Redon, of creole stock herself, who advised Gauguin on the living conditions of the far-away countries that he considered to go to. Redon did not care for Gauguin's savage philosophy, no wonder in an artist whose achievement it was to transpose the mystic-musical Wagnerian trend into an atmosphere of mediterranean clarity. From Gauguin, no doubt, he developed the lay-out in flat bright color areas, the flat ornamental design as it can be seen in the painting, *When are you to be married?*¹⁶ But it took more subtlety in color orchestration and study of its principles adapted from Seurat,¹⁷ before he could reach around 1905 the peak of his own style and immediately have a decisive influence on Matisse, seen, for instance, in a work of 1907.¹⁸ Art historians in the future will have to watch out very carefully at this crucial point near the beginning of Fauvism and see to it that the rôles are cast the right way: the initial advance of Gauguin towards a purer type of imagination up to the first trip to Tahiti, his subsequent hesitation "to use all the resources of the unconscious realization, except in words, and to be content with a mere reproduction of the magic realm," to quote once more Charles Sterling.¹⁴ Gauguin simply replaces the repertory of Christian and pagan myths by a new barbarian iconography, but "the flowers of Redon suffice to make us dream. Between them and reality there is the relay of visionary imagination inaccessible to the intellect." This is a stage that Gauguin has never reached and it is therefore Redon who provides an important link in the comprehensive achievements leading up to the new look of modern art. Among all the critics only Dorival¹⁹ has hinted at this point.

It would be interesting to figure out which suggestions from more remote sources, beyond the art of his time, have touched Redon and spurred him to go ahead in bringing out this sparkle and this intensity that is his own. In the *Flower Piece* (fig. 3) from the Petit Palais one cannot overlook the good use in lay-out, color economy, and space suggestion that he has derived from the study of Japanese prints so easily available in Paris at that time, but it would be pointless to go through the whole Hokusai to pin down definite borrowings in detail just as it would be of no avail to search for any

¹⁶ R. Staechelin collection. Reproduced in John Rewald, *Gauguin*. N.Y. (1938), plate 116.

¹⁷ See Georg Schmidt, "Leçons du Passé," p. XVIII in: *L'Histoire de la Peinture Moderne, Matisse, Munch, Rouault*, ed. by Marcel Raynal, Paris, 1950.

¹⁸ *Flower Vase*. Paris, G. Aubry collection.

¹⁹ *Les Etapes de la Peinture Française Contemporaine*. Tome Premier. Paris, 1943. pp. 47-57.



Fig. 3. Redon: *Vase of Flowers*, pastel, Petit Palais, Paris.
Bulloz photograph.

reference to a single Ravenna mosaic although he went to Ravenna in 1908 and came home with one of his finest pastels, *Souvenir des Mosaïques de Ravenne*, an evocation of what he has kept in terms of arabesque, color harmonies, and brilliance.

With the *Portrait of Violette Heiman*²⁰ of 1909, from the Cleveland Museum, the artist reaches the period of his greatest maturity; his favorite theme of a woman's presence expressed by flowers by now shows an all over harmony, a degree of saturation and integration of elements not seen before. A half circle of purple holds the composition together; it is built around a crescent-like pinkish-brown area from which green patches and yellow islands and rose radiate; the flowerlike existence of the girl with her striking silhouette complements the sophisticated and rich bouquet-arrangements in tone arabesque and area scale, all held together in one plane. See the contrast to Degas' *Madame Hertel*²¹ in a similar theme and an equally extraordinary work to get the full measurement of Redon's novelty. Feature for feature one could point out the difference between an art based on analysis and one based on synthesis.

The comparison of two pastels, done a whole decade apart, can give an

²⁰ Reproduced in Mellerio, *Odilon Redon*, Paris, 1923. pp. 88-89.

²¹ N.Y. Metropolitan Museum, H. O. Havemeyer collection.



Fig. 4. Redon: Portrait of Mme. Arthur Fontaine, pastel, 1901,
Collection of Jean Arthur Fontaine, Paris.

idea of Redon's stylistic development and also of the way he has been able to build up his perception in increasing complexity and simplicity at once (figs. 4 and 5). The pastel of *Mme. Arthur Fontaine*²² was made in 1901, whereas *Fecundity*²³ is to be dated around 1911. It is not my intention to play the one work up against the other. The sitter of the earlier work was a dear friend to the painter and a lot of this feeling has gone into the pastel but it is based on one single feature, on the luminosity attached to the yellow golden garment; it borrows from the model while in the later work the subject is absorbed by the idea of the art work and its supernatural reality, by its quiet great mass and harmony, too. Although Redon always sticks to profile view and flowers for decoration, and thus narrows his possibilities seldom he repeats himself because the nuances are so very decisive with him. The pieces of a woman with flowers constitute the central type of the whole pastel

²² Collection of Jean-Arthur Fontaine, Paris.

²³ Formerly in the Chicago Art Institute, now in the Steegmuller collection, New York.



Fig. 5. Redon: *Fecundity*, pastel, collection of Mr. and Mrs. F. Steegmuller, New York.

period. There are many but always different, as far apart as one symphony from another.

Still it would be inaccurate to restrict the pastel period of Redon to the flower pieces and the evocations of women although they are better known. It would not be enough to base the claim of his universality as an artist on them alone. There is besides a large group of pastels, situated in time parallel to the former group and especially covering the decade from 1905 to 1914, where a wider universe in subjects, imagination and artistic orchestration is encompassed. These works, however, happen to be often in the most un-accessible places and have therefore been more or less neglected by the three authors of books on the artist. They belong nevertheless with his greatest accomplishments. Although I have located 37 works in this category I am not able to show more than a few in color with all the technical difficulties involved. The first, *The Cyclops*,²⁴ to be dated before 1905, is not a pastel, but a painting of the Kröller-Müller Museum and possibly a replica of a pastel.

²⁴ Reproduced in Sandström, *Le Monde imaginaire d'Odilon Redon*, p. 69.

It may well introduce this group which in many ways includes elements from the first fantastic surrealist graphic Redon as well as the color serenity of the second. In this many-dimensional world one finds such subjects as the wonders of a submarine landscape, a boat with its red sails drifting along, the dream of the Venice lagoon, the fragment of a stained glass window, the return of Buddha, a shell of colossal size in most improbable colors and luminosity, the flight to Egypt, the legend of St. George, the world of ancient myths as in this cyclops. How unconventional and unliterary this is, how fresh the approach to a scene that every schoolboy is or should be familiar with, and how simple in composition and spacing, one is almost tempted to say how natural so that the quite sophisticated and rich coloring is accepted as a fitting decoration. The transition from the world of appearance to the miraculous goes without a break. How discretely all this is rendered emotionally, with almost classic control and artistic understatement in view of the powder-laden content of the story.

To compare two mythological works, the *Quadriga*²⁵ with the *Muse on Pegasus*²⁶: the former is a theme carried over from Delacroix and even Rubens but transformed in a very characteristic way. Omitted is the whirl of gods, titans and monsters to be found on the ceiling of the *Galerie d'Apollon* but kept is the rocky landscape, the open sky, the chariot of Apollo with the inflated cloak, the cavorting horses. In spite of this dynamic motif an all-over calm has invaded the work, the celestial carriage has turned into a vision that takes place behind a curtain of irreality. Nothing could show better how far Redon has left Romanticism behind and established a new synthesis with much classic spirit and heritage. The *Pegasus* with a later date, perhaps around 1910, may indicate how the fusion of heterogeneous elements becomes even stronger, keeping in line with post-impressionist aims of synthesis of color and line, texture and structure, eye and mind.

Another comparison of two pastels, each one-figured, provides another opportunity of illustrating the accomplishments of what we have to call the pastel style of Redon. *The Wreath*²⁷ is the earlier work and has kept some features from the graphic outlook of his first existence, it can be understood as a line drawing with color added while the *Sacred Heart*²⁸ (fig. 6) shows this glowing luminosity from within and can do away with any grotesque and fantastic paraphernalia to express the super-natural. It is by this symphonic use of color that Redon has freed himself completely from illustration and literary meanings, has reached spirituality based on visual elements alone,

²⁵ Collection de Gonet, Paris. Reproduced in Mellerio, pp. 136-137.

²⁶ Reproduced in Fontainas, André and Louis Vauxelles, *Histoire générale de l'art français de la Révolution à nos jours*. Paris, s. d., p. 220.

²⁷ Collection Mrs. Charles J. Martin, Minneapolis. Reproduced in Mellerio, pp. 12-13.

²⁸ Musée du Louvre, Cabinet de Dessins.



Fig. 6. Redon: *The Sacred Heart*, pastel, Louvre, Cabinet des Dessins.

and thus fulfilled the longing of the artistic generation of 1900 in such a degree that, comparable to Cézanne, he could be seen as a figure who had opened the door to the younger ones.

There are not too many works in his *oeuvre* where the breadth of his vision goes along with his refined sense of color and scale, where harmony joins intimacy and grandeur as fittingly as in this evocation of *Orpheus* (fig. 7) from the Cleveland Museum. The different degrees of reality or irreality, if you will, which in other works one could see side by side, realistic flowers, dreamy landscapes, mythological creatures, are indeed fused in such a way, the elements of light, color, and design are so thoroughly integrated that



Fig. 7. Redon: *Orpheus*, pastel, Cleveland Museum of Art.

here, perhaps more than in any other work, intuition, inspiration, and realization of the later Redon art are one.

In discussing the whole group under the heading of pastels²⁹ it was not my intention to stress the revival of an old technique as such. It is, however, interesting to see that the late Millet and the late Manet along with Degas had used it before to inaugurate a new phase of style. As a technique between drawing and painting the pastel, in the hands of Redon, was certainly the most appropriate vehicle to pass from the early graphic expression and the charcoal drawings to the rich style of the end that produced also quite a number of oil paintings, which, however, never achieved the same brilliance and quality.

²⁹ The author is preparing a study on Redon's pastels and would be grateful for any information regarding unpublished works.



Photograph of
Claude Monet
shortly before
his death
in 1926.

MONET AND ABSTRACT PAINTING¹

William Seitz

Among the great precursors who put forth the premises which culminated in abstract painting, none has been so reduced in stature by short-sighted judgments, begrudging praise and absurd generalizations as has Claude Monet. Although he was all but deified by the generation which included his friends Georges Clemenceau, Stéphane Mallarmé, Rodin and Cézanne, who saw his late work as a final consummation, these same canvases were rejected by the French avant garde of about 1905² as formless

¹ This paper began a restudy of Monet's career, his aims and methods, the development of his style, his philosophy, and his position in the growth of modern painting. At present, no catalogue of his work exists. I should therefore appreciate information concerning the locations of specific works, or other material bearing on his art and life.

² Marcel Duchamp, in a televised interview, implied that Impressionism was an avant-garde style in 1902, when he painted his *Chapel at Blainville*, but that by 1904 it was already becoming retardataire.

and without structure. The ensuing critical taste, nurtured in the atmosphere of Cubism, turned away from Monet as it did from academic Impressionism.

But today, certain of the constituent elements of modern art have, so to speak, merged. The optical qualities of Impressionism, which appeared so antithetical to abstract painting twenty years ago, are integral to the abstract painting of the forties and fifties. In America, this reintegration came about with the expressionistic aggressiveness of the forties, but in the fifties it has become increasingly lyrical, and more and more identified with nature.³ Because of this, it is once again possible to appreciate Monet's individual achievements, and to see his importance for the art of the twentieth century.⁴

Monet once wished he had been born blind, in order to experience sight suddenly: to see the world naively, as pure shape and color.⁵ To Cézanne, he was greater than Constable and Turner, the most "prodigious" optical sensibility in the history of painting.⁶ But he was so much more besides! His painter's eyes were opened in 1856, by Boudin, before the roll of sea and sky at Le Havre. "I want to be always before [the sea] or on it," he said to his friend Geffroy, "and when I die, to be buried in a buoy."⁷ Spiritually, Monet was a man of nature; not of its objects, like Courbet, but of its mysterious processes: storm, wind, rain, fog, darkening and lightening. And he made the final renunciation of the thoroughgoing pantheist—that of the self before the universe.

Could Monet's painting, *Impression: Sunrise* (which christened the group that exhibited together in 1874),⁸ possibly be further from the manner

³ It was this cessation of aggression, in concurrence with the growth of a "new" naturalism, which has led to the substitution of "Abstract Impressionism," as a goal, for "Abstract Expressionism."

⁴ Meyer Schapiro's essay, "Matisse and Impressionism" was an early and a significant contribution to this end, though it regarded Impressionism as a group style. See *Androcles*, I (Feb., 1932), 1, pp. 21-36.

⁵ Quoted by Lilla Cabot Perry, in *The American Magazine of Art*, XVIII (March 1927), 3, p. 120: "... try to forget what objects you have before you, a tree, a house, a field or whatever. Merely think, here is a little square of blue, here an oblong of pink, here a streak of yellow, and paint it just as it looks to you, the exact color and shape, until it gives your own naive impression of the scene before you."

⁶ Quoted (in reminiscence) by Joachim Gasquet, *Cézanne*, Paris, 1921, p. 90: "Mais Monet est un oeil, l'oeil le plus prodigieux depuis qu'il y a des peintres. . . . Il ira au Louvre, allez, à côté de Constable et de Turner. Foutre, il est encore bien plus grand." Cf. Gustave Geffroy, also quoting Cézanne (*Claude Monet*, Paris, 1922, p. 198): "Le plus fort de nous tous. . . . Monet! je l'ajoute au Louvre!"

⁷ Quoted by Geffroy, *op. cit.*, p. 5: "Je voudrais être toujours devant ou dessus, et quand je mourrai, être enterré dans une bouée."

⁸ Reproduced in *The French Impressionists in Full Color*, London (Phaidon), 1952, pl. 12, and Jean Leymarie, *Impressionism*, Lausanne (Skira), 1955, vol. 1, p. 106.

afterwards associated with the term "Impressionism"? Though painted at dawn, perhaps from a boat, the subdued poetry of its illumination resembles that of Whistler's Nocturnes. It is similar in mood, subject, and in an extreme simplification—one could say *abstractness*—like that of the Japanese prints which both artists loved. The Nocturnes, in the limited number of their formal elements and their planar geometric structure, were revolutionary. In contrast with Monet's *Sunrise*, Whistler's *Nocturne In Blue and Gold—Old Battersea Bridge* calls attention to the polarity, hard to avoid in studying abstract art, between a naturalistic, freely curvilinear form and an emphasis on horizontals and verticals. The *Sunrise* is looser and more open—closer to Jongkind or Turner.



Fig. 1. Monet: *View of the Thames*, 1871, Collection of J. J. Astor, London.

But in other works of the same period, Monet shows an even keener interest than Whistler in the opposed horizontal and vertical, notably in a view of the Thames of 1871 (fig. 1), in which the structural members of a pier, their staccato rhythm pointedly emphasized against the water, provide the motif for a passage as geometrically abstract as Piet Mondrian's pier-and-

ocean pictures. Here, also, is the prototype for the methodical river paintings of the Neo-Impressionists.⁹

After 1880, Monet had fewer contacts with the impressionist group. His art became more personal and his visual concentration more acute. His process of painting, although it still began with a searching visual analysis, now was followed, to a far greater degree than during the seventies, by a creative translation of the motif into a heightened pictorial equivalent. The diagonals of linear perspective, and the volumetric space which they hollow out, were either *avoided* in the selection of subjects or rigorously controlled. No matter how far into depth the background receded, the picture was compressed into a shallow, laterally organized space. And during this same period, under the sun of the Midi and along the coast of Normandy and Brittany, he worked out the bold color and assertive brushwork which the Fauves were to adopt twenty years later.

The audacity and astonishing variety of Monet's brushwork has not been studied. It has nothing to do with divisionist theory; it cannot be typified by any one work or group of works, and it will not fall into a neat evolution from large to small strokes, thin to thick pigment, or flat areas to broken touches. To fully apprehend the number of stroke-types which he used, it would be necessary to seek out every one of his paintings and examine each, in the original, area by area. There can be only one source for such rhythmic variety: it is a transposition of the multiplicity of nature.

Monet spoke of man as only an atom in comparison with the universe, and advised a lady painter to "remember that every leaf on the tree is as important as the features of your model. I should like just for once," he said, "to see you put her mouth under one eye instead of under her nose!"¹⁰ Man, seen as an object, is a part of nature. It is when the self turns *inward* that a break occurs. Monet did not allow such a rupture to take place within his art. The explanation for this cannot be found, however, in the "objectivity" of his personality. He was neurotically emotional, subject to periods of desperate psychic agony and, like Mallarmé, to convictions of his own failure and creative sterility. At such times (in the language of perception which he used so naturally) he saw "everything black."¹¹

The magnificent seascapes of 1885 and 1886, done at Etretat and Belle-Ile, tremble on the razor edge where vision mediates between the world

⁹The period from 1863-1872 is of special interest in its concentration of the rectilinear and planar structure of the Poussinist and Italian classical traditions (Degas and Manet), the surface qualities of Spanish painting (Manet), the combination of these sources with analogous qualities found in Japanese prints (Manet), and pure Japanese influence (Whistler), toward modern compositional solutions incipiently abstract.

¹⁰Quoted by Perry, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

¹¹Monet to Bazille, 1868. In G. Poulain, *Bazille et ses Amis*, Paris, 1932, p. 149.

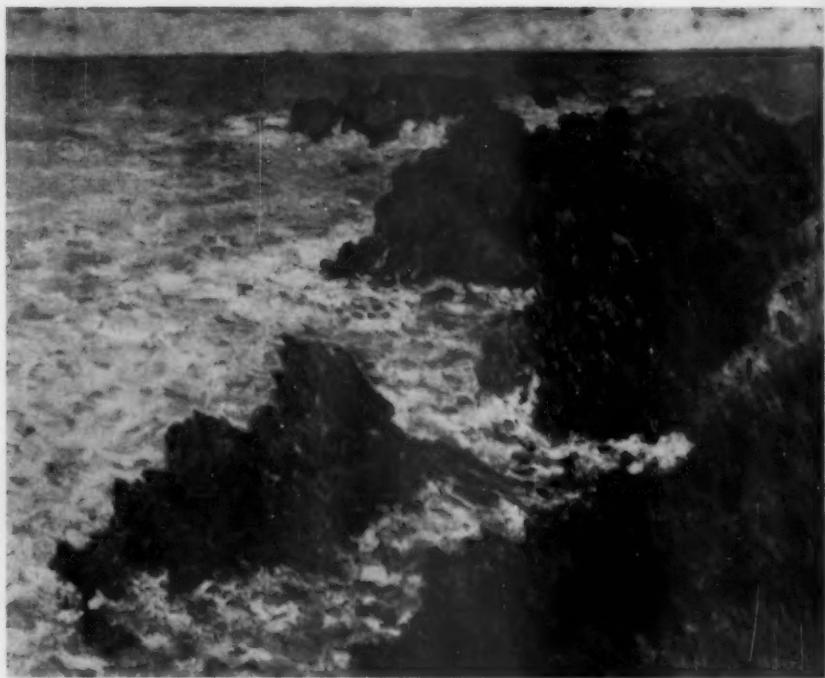


Fig. 2. Monet: *The Rocks at Belle-Ile*, Luxembourg Museum, Paris.

out there" and the inner experiences of the mind, sensibilities and emotions. As a nature poet, Monet's psychic state was more determined by the *weather* than by any other influence. When coastal rains continued day after day, when the time and money assigned for work in a particular locality began to run out, when the painting of flowers indoors became tedious, his self-doubt was insanely magnified; he saw himself as a man doomed, and only wished to get his hated canvases out of sight.¹²

But he could become depressed also by weather which, in his words, was "a little too beautiful";¹³ he longed for "rain and even cold"¹³ in order

¹² For one such instance see Monet to Durand-Ruel, Pourville, Sept. 18, 1882. In Lionello Venturi, *Les Archives de l'Impressionisme*, Paris, 1939, Vol. I, p. 236: "Le doute s'empare de moi, il me semble que je suis perdu, que je ne pourrai plus rien faire, il me tarde de recevoir votre envoi afin de boucler malles et valises et ne plus voir mes horribles toiles."

¹³ Monet to Durand-Ruel, July 19, 1901. In Venturi, *op. cit.*, p. 382.

to return to work. To Monet, the most frightful tempest was beautiful; such weather was bad only because it prevented him from painting outdoors.¹⁴ "I am enthusiastic about this sinister region," he wrote to Durand-Ruel from Belle-Ile, "and justly, for it takes me away from what I am in the habit of doing, and moreover, I confess . . . [I] have a great deal of difficulty in rendering that sombre and terrible aspect [fig. 2]. It is pointless for me to be a man of the sun. . . ."¹⁵

By 1886 (the year van Gogh arrived in Paris) Monet had initiated the method which expressionist landscape was to follow. At what degree of intensity, or at what stage in the transformation of natural rhythms into human gestures, would the focus of these works change? At what point would the churning impastos and writhing contours by which the sea, rocks and storm are pulled forward toward the picture plane express man's, rather than nature's, anguish?

Beside the simultaneity of pattern, depth and live brushwork in these pictures, the tension of some of them is heightened through the stark opposition of tortuous curves to geometricity. Both qualities of form exist in nature, and both have their psychological complements in the opposed human predispositions either to passion or structural order.

By the time of the famous Haystacks, which occupied Monet at various periods between 1884 and 1893 (fig. 3), he had become obsessed with the most fugitive atmospheric effects, and began concentrating his successive work periods into increasingly short spans of time. But the method of replacing canvases with the changing light did not begin as a theoretical program. Monet repeatedly emphasized his antipathy—his "horror"—of formulated methods, systems or doctrines.¹⁶ He insisted that it made not the slightest difference what pigments he used,¹⁷ and he refused to teach.¹⁸ Quite literally, he was *driven* by nature to multiply his canvases because,

¹⁴ Monet to Durand-Ruel, Etretat, Oct. 28, 1885. In Venturi, *op. cit.*, p. 297: "Je suis désespéré du temps: depuis quelques jours c'est effroyable, beau sans doute mais il est impossible de travailler. . . ."

¹⁵ Monet to Durand-Ruel, Kervilahen, Belle-Ile, Oct. 28, 1886. In Venturi, *op. cit.*, p. 320: "Je suis enthousiasmé de ce pays sinistre et justement parce qu'il me sort de ce que j'ai l'habitude de faire, et du reste, je l'avoue, je dois me forcer et ai beaucoup de peine pour rendre cet aspect sombre et terrible. J'ai beau être l'homme du soleil, comme vous dites, il ne faut pas se spécialiser dans une seule note."

¹⁶ Monet to John Charteris, Giverny, June 21, 1926. In J. Charteris, *John Sargent*, New York 1927 p. 131: ". . . j'ai toujours en horreur des théories enfin que je n'ai que la merite d'avoir peint directement devant la nature en cherchant à rendre mes impressions devant les effets les plus fugitifs. . . ."

¹⁷ Giverny, June 3, 1905. In Venturi, *op. cit.*, p. 404: "Quant au couleurs j'emploie, est-ce si intéressant que cela? Je ne le pense pas, attendu que l'on peut faire plus lumineux et mieux avec une toute autre palette."

¹⁸ Geoffroy, *op. cit.*, p. 119: "Mais je ne professe pas la peinture, je me borne à en faire."

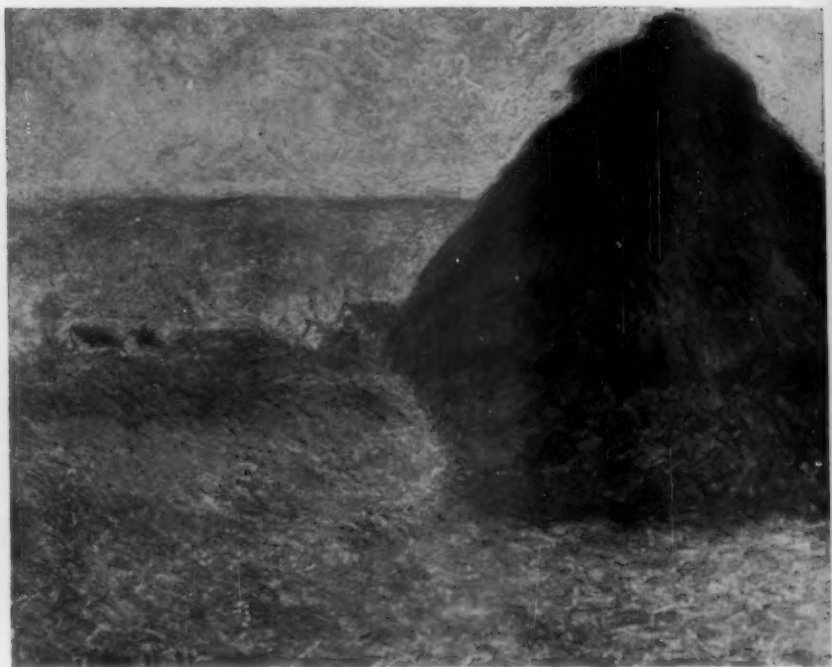


Fig. 3. Monet: *Haystack at Sunset near Giverny*, 1891, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

as he said, "the sun goes down so fast that I cannot follow it."¹⁹ The "instantaneity" that he wanted was first of all a principle of *harmonious unity*: the permeation of the entire scene with an identical quality of light and color.¹⁹ He was trying to *stop* time, not hurry it along.

No one had ever probed so deeply into the experience of unqualified *seeing* before the Haystacks, and it comes as a shock to find the series described as "the worst offender" among Monet's "poorest efforts."²⁰

This opinion would not have been shared by Wassily Kandinsky who, on seeing one version exhibited in Moscow, felt that "suddenly, for the first time in my life, I found myself looking at a real painting."²¹ In relationship

¹⁹ Geffroy, *op. cit.*, p. 189. Monet's solution to the problem of changing light was already implicit in an essay—still the best existing discussion of the psychology of Impressionism—written by the poet Jules Laforgue in response to an Impressionist exhibition held in Berlin in 1883. See Jules Laforgue, *Oeuvres Complètes*, Paris, 1923, pp. 133-145. A translation appears in *Art News*, LV (May, 1956), 3, pp. 43-45.

²⁰ Bernard Myers, *Modern Art in the Making*, New York, 1950, p. 162.

²¹ *Wassily Kandinsky Memorial*, New York, 1945, pp. 53f.

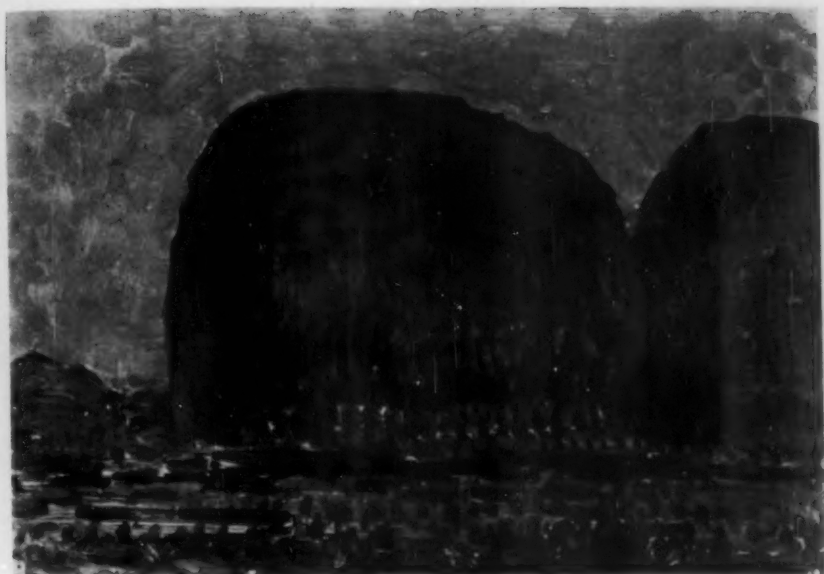


Fig. 4. Piet Mondrian: *Haystacks*, 1909, Oolmar Collection, Kelowna, Canada.

with the music of Wagner and the sunsets of Moscow, this was the pivotal event which impelled him toward a purely abstract, musical art. "It seemed to me, that, without a catalogue in my hand, it would have been impossible to recognize what the painting was meant to represent."²¹ It showed him the "previously unimagined, unrevealed and all-surpassing power of the palette."²¹ Until the Bauhaus period, Kandinsky was a naturalist, working at the extreme pole of organic abstraction. With such predilections, he perhaps failed to note that haystacks, often built to resemble houses, are a form of *architecture*; but, like Monet, Piet Mondrian responded to their structural form. In his transition from *Jugendstil* curves to a geometric style he also utilized haystacks as a motif (fig. 4).

In the paintings of poplars (1891), and especially in the façades of Rouen Cathedral exhibited in 1895 (fig. 5), Monet's architectonic interest is apparent. According to Lionello Venturi, he failed in an attempt to preserve the form of the building and hence the series is "the most evident indication of Monet's creative decadence."²² Others regard the Cathedrals as theoretical acrobatics—the *reductio ad absurdum* of impressionist doctrine. To Monet's admirers, however, they were seen as a great symphony of chang-

²¹ Lionello Venturi, *Impressionists and Symbolists*, New York, 1950, p. 65.



Fig. 5. Monet: *Cathedral of Rouen, Sunlight*, 1894, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

ing light, with "movements" in gray, white, gold and blue. But beyond this, Clemenceau saw drawing which was "tightly constructed, clean, mathematically precise," and "the geometric conception of the whole."²³

The fluctuating planar structure initiated in the Cathedrals reached its climax in the Venetian series. During the nineties Monet had begun to paint more and more from windows and balconies rather than outdoors, and the period of retouching in the studio was greatly expanded. Though less than three months was spent in Venice during 1908, the year in which

²³ Georges Clemenceau, *Claude Monet: The Water Lilies*, New York, 1930, p. 132.

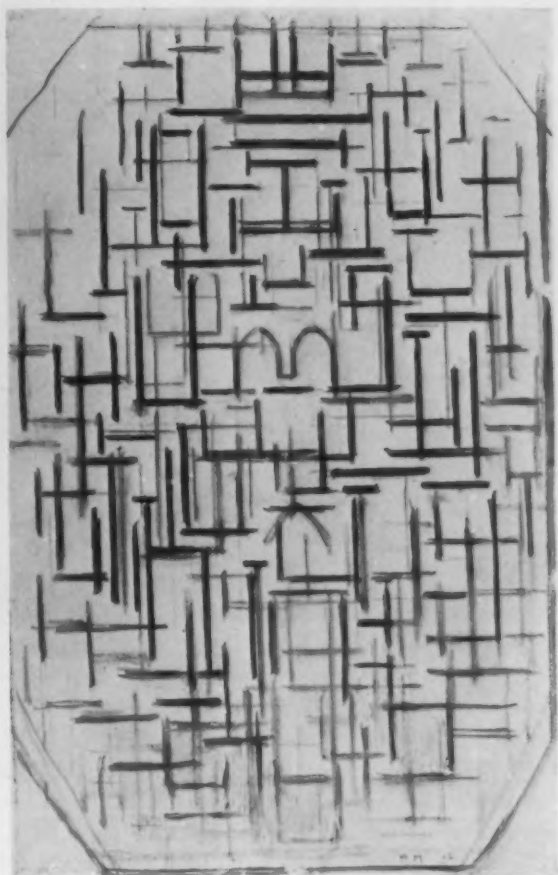


Fig. 6. Piet Mondrian: *Composition*, drawing, Collection of Harry Holtzman, New York.

the series is dated, Monet was *still working on it in 1912*, cuing one composition from another.²⁴

It was at this time that Piet Mondrian began the studies of church façades (fig. 6) which link his earlier drawings of the sea with the later pier-and-ocean and plus-and-minus compositions. He began these studies outdoors, before the motifs, but continued to distill them in the studio: "I

²⁴ See correspondence during 1911 and 1912 in Venturi, *Archives de l'impressionisme*, Vol. I, concluding with Monet to Durand-Ruel, Giverny, Jan. 30, 1912, p. 430: "... j'espère avoir prochainement terminé mes toiles de Venise."



Fig. 7. Monet: *Palazzo da Mula*, 1908[-1912?], National Gallery of Art (Chester Dale Collection), Washington, D.C.

still worked like an Impressionist,"²⁵ he later said. In structure, they are closer to Monet's *Palazzo da Mula* (fig. 7), in the National Gallery at Washington, than they are to most cubist works. The symmetrical pyramid of Cubism is rejected for a flatter, more uniformly active field which, in the interest of reducing physical mass, is pushed forward and strongly articulated in the *upper* portion of the composition and weakened, like a reflection, in the lower portion. The pulsation which Monet achieves by vibrating color, brushstroke, and architectural lines is paralleled, in Mondrian's studies, by the free rendering of similar horizontal and vertical accents—an effect which he characterized as "the emotional restlessness of the Impressionists' technique."²⁶

The stages in Mondrian's evolution toward a fluctuating picture plane also relate the two painters. For both, haystacks, façades and trees served as motifs. Both, moreover, loved and painted the sea and found their reality in a natural rhythm. "Seeing the sea, sky and stars," Mondrian wrote,

²⁵ Quoted by Michel Seuphor, in *Magazine of Art*, XLV (May 1952), 5, p. 219.

²⁶ James Johnson Sweeney, *Piet Mondrian*, New York, 1948, p. 7.

"I represented this through a multiplicity of crosses. I was impressed by the greatness of nature. . . ." ²⁷ Their criticisms of Cubism, furthermore, focus on an identical point. Monet, late in life, decried the "new movements" which rejected Impressionism in the interest of the "solidity of unified volumes." ²⁸ Mondrian objected to the Cubist's "volume in space." ²⁹

But Monet's paintings of his water garden at Giverny led him to the opposite formal pole. In 1890 he was undertaking to represent things, as he wrote, "admirable to see," but "impossible to do: water with plants which undulate at the bottom." ³⁰ Reflections of willows, clouds and sky mingle with the forms of water plants both on the surface and below it. But by 1905, as the painter's eye moves closer to the motif, trees, bridge and shoreline—the tangible reference points which distinguish physical mass from its mirrored image—are eliminated. The merging reflections form one shimmering segments of a world shorn of solid objects. ³¹ In the *Nymphéas*, or *Water Landscapes*, Monet's spirit, impelled toward appearances which are mysterious and enveloping, is close to the poetry of Mallarmé or the music of Debussy.

In the Orangerie of the Tuileries a group of huge water landscapes forms a unique and monumental cycle. Still dismissed, in 1950, as Monet's "gravest artistic error," ³² André Masson, in 1952, called the Orangerie the "Sistine Chapel of Impressionism." ³³ Completely without precedent, these paintings combine a globular, enclosing space with flatness and bold brushwork. In content, they stop just short of Symbolism, Expressionism or pure abstraction. Happily, we are able to experience something of their great beauty in America, through the eighteen-and-one-half-foot canvas recently acquired by the Museum of Modern Art (fig. 8).

At Giverny, in the water garden, Monet explained the aims of this final period to his philosophically-minded friend Clemenceau: "I am simply expending my efforts upon a maximum of appearances in close correlation with unknown realities. When one is on the plane of concordant appearances one cannot be far from reality, or at least from what we can know of it. . . . Your error is to wish to reduce the world to your measure, whereas, by enlarging your knowledge of things, you will find your knowledge of self enlarged." ³⁴

²⁷ Seuphor, *op. cit.*, p. 219.

²⁸ Rewald, *op. cit.*, p. 434, fn. 59. From Geffroy, *op. cit.*

²⁹ Sweeney, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

³⁰ Monet to Geffroy [Giverny] June 22, 1890. Geffroy, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

³¹ See Karl Hermann Usener, "Claude Monets Seerosen-Wandbilder in der Orangerie," *Wallraf-Richartz-Jahrbuch*, XIV (1952), pp. 216-225.

³² Venturi, *Impressionists and Symbolists*, p. 63.

³³ In *Verve*, VII (1952), 27 & 28, p. 68: ". . . il me plaît, très sérieusement, de dire de l'Orangerie des Tuileries qu'elle est la Sixtine de l'Impressionisme . . . un des sommets du génie français."

³⁴ Clemenceau, *op. cit.*, pp. 154 f.

In any attempt to assess the contributions of those great painters who formed the presuppositions of abstract art, Monet must appear as a primary figure. More than anyone else, he epitomizes the optical, and hence psychological, sensibility of his period and ours. As an instinctive pantheist, he never imposed either his own emotional projection or a geometric grid on

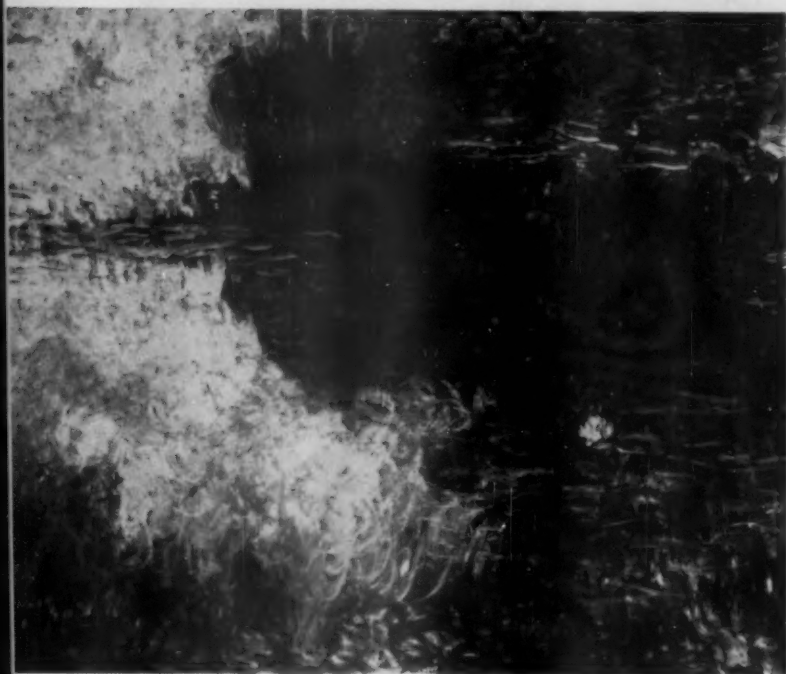


Fig. 8. Monet: *Water Lilies*, 1916-1926, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

nature, but in probing the essences of his motifs, pulling them forward toward the picture plane, and interpreting them in rhythmic brushstrokes and coloristic pulsation, he was instrumental in establishing the relativistic and vitalistic principles of abstract painting as we know it today.

And just as important: his belief in a nonmaterial reality constituted an essential stage in a development from the physicalistic theory of Courbet toward the metaphysical naturalism which motivated the early painting of Mondrian and Kandinsky, and which is so much alive at the present moment.



Mathieu: *Painting No. 5*, 1955, Kootz Gallery.

"Although there seems not to be that inevitability of parity between a recognizable object and the thought or feeling for which it stands, still it is unthinkable that symbolic expression of one kind or another is not taking place."

SYMBOLS IN LITERATURE AND ART

Weller Embler

Words, Signs, and Symbols

The most commonly used means of communication is, of course, language. We use language every day, assuming that because of it we can converse with others with little danger of being misunderstood. The dictionary is accessible to all, and it would seem that words mean what they mean. But very often our use of words is ambiguous, vague, and irresponsible; this is sometimes because of ignorance or illiteracy, but just as often it is a deliberate intention. When Alice professes not to understand Humpty Dumpty's use of words, he presents the case for caprice with considerable logic:

"There are three hundred and sixty-four days when you might get un-birthday presents—"

Revision of paper read at the 13th Annual Conference of the Committee on Art Education at the Museum of Modern Art, New York City, March 16, 1955, under the title: Symbolism, Meaning, and Reality. Professor Embler is head of the Department of Humanities at the Cooper Union, New York City.

"Certainly," said Alice.

"And only *one* for birthday presents, you know. There's glory for you!"

"I don't know what you mean by 'glory,'" Alice said.

Humpty Dumpty smiled contemptuously. "Of course you don't—till I tell you. I meant 'there's a nice knockdown argument for you!'"

"But 'glory' doesn't mean 'a nice knock-down argument,'" Alice objected.

"When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less."

"The question is," said Alice, "whether you *can* make words mean so many different things."

"The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master—that's all."

Very often *we* are the master. Yet it is the virtue and strength of language even at its most impressionistic and evocative that it is intended to serve in close correspondence to the realities of human experience. Language is surely our most useful way of communicating ideas, but like democracy, we must be eternally vigilant in our protection of it.

However, a meaning is not always conveyed by words, and talking with one another is not always done with words. Though we suppose that the meaning of signs and symbols is not so definitely fixed as the meaning for words, a little inquiry into the nature of signs and symbols will show us, I think, that they have an intrinsic meaning which words cannot have. Consider, for instance, the meaning conveyed by traffic lights. These signs are acutely exact, and they communicate meaning virtually without ambiguity. They are not rich in meaning, but their meaning is unmistakable. Recall with what astonishment Robinson Crusoe recognized the human footprint in the sand. Under the circumstances, the footprint was a fixed sign incapable of being misread, and it was the exactness of the sign which was responsible for the depth of Robinson Crusoe's emotional reaction. Since they often embody their meaning within their shape and form, signs and symbols are more precise in meaning than words. That is, they are already, in part at least, what they stand for. In the very act of symbolizing or signifying, they *are* what they represent. The symbol is the thing it stands for, and when the symbol is at once a symbol and the thing it stands for, it is itself a reality, and its meaning is conveyed with the force of an event. An example will serve to clarify this idea.

Toward the end of Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur* we learn how upon a Trinity Sunday at night King Arthur dreamed that Sir Gawaine came to him and warned him not to fight against Sir Mordred the next day at Salisbury, for as sure as he did, both would be slain, and the most part of their knights. Sir Gawaine advises King Arthur to take a treaty, thus putting in a delay. Waking from his dream, King Arthur sends Sir Lucan and Sir Bedivere to take a treaty with Sir Mordred. Sir Mordred agrees to the armistice and also to hold conference that day with King Arthur in the middle of the field between the two armies. Before King Arthur goes into the field,

he warns all his armies that if any should see a sword drawn on the other side, they should "come on fiercely, and slay that traitor, Sir Mordred," for King Arthur did not trust him. Likewise, Sir Mordred warned his host that "should any see a sword drawn, they should come on fiercely and slay all that stood before them, for in no wise did he trust the treaty." No sooner had King Arthur and Sir Mordred met and drawn up an agreement, than an adder came out of a little heath bush and stung a knight (one of the small company in the center of the field) on the foot. The thoughtless knight drew his sword to kill the adder. On both sides the armies saw the sword drawn and forthwith blew their horns and their trumpets. "And so both hosts dressed them together. . . . And never was there seen a more dolefuller battle in no Christian land."

At the end of that unhappy day it came to pass that King Arthur slew Sir Mordred, but in so doing received his own death wound and fell in a swoon to the earth. When he awoke, King Arthur charged the last living of his knights, Sir Bedivere, to take the King's sword Excalibur to the nearby waterside, to throw the sword into the water, then to return to tell him what he saw. Sir Bedivere twice disobeyed his King, so bejewelled was the sword, so beautiful and rare, he could not bring himself to cast it into the water. But sent a third time, Sir Bedivere took up the sword Excalibur and threw it as far into the water as he could. "There came an arm and an hand above the water and met it, and caught it, and so shook it thrice and brandished, and then vanished away the hand with the sword in the water."

In the first incident, the sword is a sign, and as a sign it works with fateful accuracy. The sword is drawn to be used for the purpose for which it exists; at the same time it serves as a signal to start an event for which swords were made. The irony is strengthened and made universally applicable precisely because the sword is used at once for a purpose for which it was intended and as a signal for which it was chosen. The irony is intolerable because the sign, so uniquely and materially appropriate to its purpose, is misread. (Note also that the snake is symbolic of treachery—is treachery itself—a symbol which explains in part the misreading of the sign.)

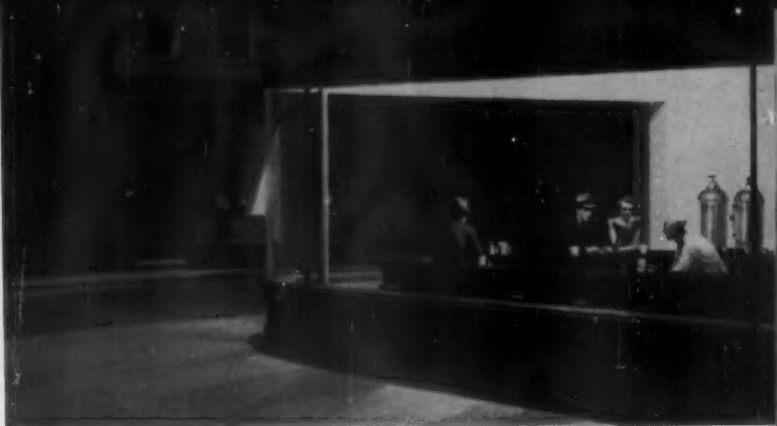
In the second incident the sword is used as a symbol. A sign usually has but one meaning to the observer; a symbol may be enriched with several meanings, but in the true symbol all meanings converge to stimulate a unified emotional response in the observer. Though no single meaning is attached to the symbol, still it cannot by its nature represent, for instance, its opposite, as is possible with words. The sword Excalibur stands perhaps for the mysterious and wonderful power of the supernatural world to protect King Arthur; it also suggests that he has been cherished, that he is immortal, and that one day he will return to England when he shall be most needed. In *Le Morte D'Arthur* the sword symbol is used responsibly and communally, and the cluster of feelings which surrounds it may be said to express the ideals of knighthood in the Middle Ages.

Symbolism and Meaning

We can, if we wish, make anything stand for anything. But wilful and private symbolizing is a risky business, not only because it imperils communication but because it is false to reality. Words, especially highly abstract words, can be twisted to mean the opposite of what we have come to expect them to mean, and we can be wearied out with their contrarities. But for the most part "object" symbols, even when used in imaginative and uncommonly revealing ways, cannot be changed into something they are not. We may say that "war is peace," but we know that a rifle with fixed bayonet is not a white dove with an olive branch, and nothing can convince us that it is, unless, of course, we recognize a deliberate incongruity used for its shock value. We may say that "death is life," but we know that the skull of poor Yorick is not the head of a living being. We may say that "freedom is slavery," but we may not use the image of a sea gull in full career as an emblem of imprisonment. Plato's choice of a cave as symbolic of the limitations of human understanding was so obviously right as to go without saying; he could not very well have used a tower. It is true that we have attached somewhat arbitrary symbolic meanings to the laurel wreath and to the crown of thorns, but by no stretch of the imagination could we use the crown of sweet laurel to symbolize intense suffering, nor the crown of thorns to symbolize joyous triumph, except insofar as the symbolism may suggest a deeper meaning than the symbol by itself can bear the burden of.

Symbols are more closely linked with reality than are words. We have to agree on the meaning of words, because the word is not the thing it stands for but rather a convenient and accepted substitute. The picture symbol, however, is often the thing it stands for, and its power in communication may well be a function of its verisimilitude. Moreover, the symbol is profligate with associations that have accumulated around it, and history is more often than not responsible for the wealth of meaning in a symbol. But ultimately, of course, pictorial symbols, like words, are meaningful only as man has given them meaning, or understands their meaning through the prescriptive connection which they have with his life in the world. Consider for example the cup, reaching as it does far back into antiquity as a symbol. In the Christian faith the cup is heavily weighted with meaning, not least because of its inalienable connection with realities, as in the Last Supper and as the Holy Grail. Nevertheless, the cup is, like the cross, wholly human in meaning.

Man is the measure of all things. And man chooses his symbols according as they are unavoidably linked with his experience as man. We may find in Vitruvius a telling illustration of this idea. In Chapter I of Book IV of his *Ten Books on Architecture*, Vitruvius gives an account (doubtless mythical) of the origins of the three orders and says that when the Ionian colonies of Asia Minor wished to build temples for the immortal gods, they first of all raised a temple to Apollo, such as they had seen in Achaea, "calling it



Edward Hopper: *Nighthawks*, oil, 1942, Art Institute of Chicago.

Doric because they had first seen that kind of temple built in the states of the Dorians."

Wishing to set up columns in that temple, but not having rules for their symmetry, and being in search of some way by which they could render them fit to bear a load and also of a satisfactory beauty of appearance, they measured the imprint of a man's foot and compared this with his height. On finding that, in a man, the foot was one sixth of the height, they applied the same principle to the column, and reared the shaft, including the capital, to a height six times its thickness at its base. Thus the Doric Column, as used in buildings, began to exhibit the proportions, strength, and beauty of the body of a man.

Just so afterwards, when they desired to construct a temple to Diana in a new style of beauty, they translated these footprints into terms characteristic of the slenderness of women, and thus first made a column the thickness of which was only one eighth of its height, so that it might have a taller look. At the foot they substituted the base in place of a shoe; in the capital they placed the volutes, hanging down at the right and left like curly ringlets, and ornamented its front with cymatia and with festoons of fruit arranged in place of hair, while they brought the flutes down the whole shaft, falling like the folds in the robes worn by matrons. Thus in the invention of the two different kinds of columns, they borrowed manly beauty, naked and unadorned, for the one, and for the other the delicacy, adornment, and proportions characteristic of women.

The third order, called Corinthian, is an imitation of the slenderness of a maiden; for the outlines and limbs of maidens, being more slender on account of their tender years, admit of prettier effects in the way of adornment.

Does the truth inherent in this myth perhaps explain the reason why the three orders of columns have been so widely admired? They have an analogy to life, a verisimilitude, a fixed and basic reference to man himself.

There are other symbols which have been in common use for centuries, yet they seem never to have lost their power to evoke an emotional response from the observer. These symbols came to man as naturally, one might say, taking a thought from Keats, as "leaves to the tree."

The mother-and-child image is a timeless symbol of this kind; so also are the images of earth, sky, fire, water, the four seasons, of certain animals such as horses, of trees, fruit, and flowers, of light, darkness and of certain

colors. These realities have been used by man from time immemorial as symbols with which to express his condition. They are a part of him and he of them.

Very nearly as meaningful as symbols are the works of man's hands and mind—the harvest, the hearth or dwelling place, towers, temples, gates, various utensils and weapons, the wheel, books, machinery and so on. However complicated he may be or "his works" may become, man still clings to the symbols which signify for him his daily life in the world. And it is the imaginative use of common symbols that constitutes what we find most appealing in the visual arts (at least until recent times) and which leads us irresistibly to them.

The dwelling place, for example, has had a strong appeal to the artist, as we may judge from the innumerable times it has been used as a subject in the history of painting. The examples are so numerous, illustrations seem hardly to be called for—the temples of antiquity as they appear in Pompeian frescoes (dwelling places of the gods), walled cities and castles in mediaeval manuscripts (representing feudalism), the architectural backgrounds of the Renaissance painters (from mangers to princely palaces), the domestic interiors of the Dutch painters (the rise of the middle class), the romantic ruins of Piranesi and Hubert Robert in the eighteenth century, the studios and cafés of the Impressionists, or, to choose a twentieth century example in the United States, the houses and interior scenes of Edward Hopper come to mind as symbolic of a nostalgic and restless mood (see illus.). The dwelling lends itself to symbolic treatment because it is a real object which speaks unmistakably of man's life and yet may be enormously enriched with associative meaning. The creative imagination finds new and striking correspondences between the dwelling and the life of men, and in the finest works of art there appears a perfection of correspondence between the symbol and what it symbolizes, even though the symbolic performance may be extremely subtle. Edgar Allan Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" comes to my mind as a brilliant example of the house used symbolically.

During the whole of a dull, dark, and soundless day in the autumn of the year, when the clouds hung oppressively low in the heavens, I had been passing alone, on horseback, through a singularly dreary tract of country; and at length found myself, as the shades of evening drew on, within view of the melancholy House of Usher. I know not how it was—but, with the first glimpse of the building, a sense of insufferable gloom pervaded my spirit. . . . I looked upon the scene before me—upon the mere house, and the simple landscape features of the domain—upon the bleak walls—upon the vacant eye-like windows . . . with an utter depression of soul which I can compare to no earthly sensation more properly than to the after-dream of the reveller upon opium—the bitter lapse into everyday life—the hideous dropping off of the veil. . . .

Shaking off from my spirit what *must* have been a dream, I scanned more narrowly the real aspect of the building. Its principal feature seemed to be that of an excessive antiquity. The discoloration of ages had been great. Minute fungi



Francois Clouet. *Diane de Poitiers*, 16th Century French, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Samuel H. Kress Collection, Loan.

overspread the whole exterior, hanging in a fine tangled webwork from the eaves. Yet all this was apart from any extraordinary dilapidation. No portion of the masonry had fallen; and there appeared to be a wild inconsistency between its still perfect adaptation of parts and the crumbling condition of the individual stones. . . . Perhaps the eye of a scrutinizing observer might have discovered a barely perceptible fissure, which, extending from the roof of the building in front, made its way down the wall in a zigzag direction, until it became lost in the sullen waters of the tarn.

With incomparable aesthetic sensitivity Poe goes on to work out the similarity between the decaying house and the pathological disintegration of the people within, up to the final simultaneous collapse of both house and the last of the Ushers. The art critic will think of analogous examples in painting, such as the decaying Victorian houses of Burchfield, or a city square by Berman.

In the history of painting, interiors have also been used with symbolic meaning and effect. Call to mind the portrait of George Gisze by Hans Holbein the Younger. Every detail of the painting—vase, carnations, coins, ring-seal, table-rug, documents, quill pens, scales—is strict in its symbolic reference to the life and values of the merchant of the sixteenth century in a commercial and financial center of Europe. And one could say the same of Van Eyck's *Arnolfini portrait* or Clouet's *Diane de Poitiers* (above).

The window appears also to have held a considerable fascination for painters and writers. It is appealing in its design and purely pictorial possibilities, of course, but in addition, it has a psychological quality about it that invites symbolic use, as in certain paintings of Caspar David Friedrich or Edward Munch. The windows may carry varied meanings for different artists, yet all meanings and interpretations must center around the looking-out upon the world or the looking in upon the private life. Keats' image of the window in the "Ode to a Nightingale" is a beautiful symbolic expression of high romance:

*magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.*

The windows of Matisse are refinements for already cultivated lives looking out upon pleasing vistas of delightful color and pattern. The windows of Edward Hopper look out upon a changing world, or they stare, like forgotten people, absent-mindedly into space, or they look in upon loneliness. And a realistic window of Andrew Wyeth, curtain fluttering, speaks of strange aspects of the life within.

The tree has been used as a symbol of life and immortality by very nearly all peoples. It seems to have appealed spontaneously to the imagination of man as an image which he could use to express his own feeling for death and resurrection; and it has been a favorite subject in literature and the visual arts for a very long time. The pine was sacred to Dionysos, and the conifer to Osiris. The Christmas tree is still a vivid symbol of the gift of everlasting life. "Among the Chinese the Tree of Life was believed to be a very wonderful *persica* or *peachtree* situated in the Happy Islands of the Eastern Ocean"; and the Egyptians supposed that "In the East of Heaven stands that high *Sycamore*-tree upon which the gods sit, the tree of life by which they live."¹ In contemporary literature there is Truman Capote's "luxurious" tree (in *The Grass Harp*), "more airy than dense; its leaves, rust and speckled, green and greenish gold, . . . rippling like the colors on a peacock's tail." This tree, too, is a kind of tree-of-life for those who build their tree-house in it and seek to live free and happy in their freedom.

The symbol has within its form and being the meaning it is intended to convey. The meaning attached to the object symbol is not arbitrary, nor has it come about merely through long association with what it stands for, so as to be, as it were, a cultural habit. On the contrary, in true symbolic expression there is a transcendental parity, a spontaneous and irresistible correspondence between the concrete image and the thing it stands for. If one wishes, he may think of symbols as primordial images of the collective unconscious, taking the idea from the psychology of Jung. But one may not have to plumb

¹ Harold Bayley, *The Lost Language of Symbolism*, Lippincott, Philadelphia, 1913, Vol. II, p. 269f.



Ben Shahn: *Beatitudes*, tempera, Collection of David Harris.

"... pictorial symbols, like words, are meaningful only as man has given them meaning . . ."

that deeply. It may be enough to observe that "man is the measure," and that such symbols as speak to him bear an intimate and undeniable connection with his humanity. The parity between the thing" and the "thought" is transcendental in the sense that it cannot be otherwise, except as human sanity shall be imperiled. And it is the genius of great artists and writers that they have seen these transcendental parities intuitively and expressed them powerfully.

When Othello, determined to kill Desdemona, looks at the lamp burning by her bed and says, "Put out the light, and then put out the light," Shakespeare puts into his mouth symbolic utterance so right, so exact, as to be incontrovertible. The similarity between light and life, for man, is categorical and inevitable.

The Symbol in Abstract Art

Out of this train of thought may we possibly arrive at a new way of discussing the long-standing conflict between abstract and representational painting? What is the role of symbol in contemporary abstract art? Some critics have talked about painting before the twentieth century as "representational," saying that its intention is to depict objects which we recognize, that it is "realistic," that it is two-dimensional representation of three dimensional objects. "During the nineteenth century artists . . . let the work consist almost entirely in a fiction of human realities." Now this is not altogether sound criticism, much as one must admire José Ortega y Gasset's essay on "The Dehumanization of Art." More often than not, the great painters have "reproduced" objects not so much that we shall merely recognize them,



Philip Guston: untitled, oil, 1954, Sidney Janis Gallery.

"... arrangements and relationships of lines and shapes and colors may in themselves speak of human ideas and emotions."

but so that they have become symbols. As if Masaccio or Botticelli or Velazquez or Goya were merely representational painters! I think of the popular *Don Manuel Osorio* (the Boy with Cats and Birds) by Goya. Who would say that these cats and birds are nothing more than two-dimensional representations of three-dimensional objects? What distinguishes the painting, beyond its brilliant color and technical execution, is the haunting quality of its symbolism. The birds in the cage, the bird on the string, the relationship of the cats to the birds in the painting and of cats and birds in everyday life, all these are symbolic of dramatic conflict held in suspension, of tension unresolved—in this painting forever. With the same instinctive sense for symbolic surety of meaning yet with a purpose of conveying a quite different message, Edward Hicks, the American primitive of the nineteenth century, created a wonderfully moving scene in his *The Peaceable Kingdom*. Here the leopard is lying down with the lamb, and the white man is meeting peacefully with the Indian. As in the Goya painting, the meaning is unmistakable, and the parity between object and idea is not only self-evident but is rendered with extraordinary emotional clarity.

The painting of the post-impressionists, of Cézanne, Gauguin, and Van Gogh, is gradually acquiring symbolic significance, as society discovers new relationships and meaning in their works; and one can begin to see a similar adjustment in our understanding of Cubism and other cultural movements of the early twentieth century. But much of the recent and current abstract painting seems to present a new problem. Though often delighting the eye



Franz Kline: *Orange Outline*, oil, 1955, Sidney Janis Gallery.

and satisfying the pattern-making request of the mind (and in that sense comforting), sometimes touching the spectator's emotional life deeply, a purely abstract painting is by and large symbolically "non-communicative," unless and until our changing perceptions discover that arrangements and relationships of lines and shapes and colors may in themselves speak of human ideas and emotions. It is here, of course, that the embarrassment lies for the untutored spectator. For if they *are* communicative, what *do* these shapes and visual textures say? I recall having read somewhere an observation of W. H. Auden's that "a new convention is a revolution in sensibility." With even a modest measure of modern sensibility, it should be possible for one to look at an abstract painting as an event in itself, an object new in the world, not standing for anything except itself. And as a new event it may be a genuine addition to visual experience. Or an abstract painting may be viewed as a complicated emotion in itself, like a fine piece of bravura acting in the theatre where for the moment we do not attend to the denotative meaning of the words. The painting (perhaps even the making of the painting) is, as it were, a performance to be admired for itself. At a symposium held not long ago at the Museum of Modern Art² where six American artists discussed "What Abstract Art Means to Me," George L. K. Morris said, "Our problems may not be new to art, but the conception of an abstract picture as we know it, certainly *is*. Can you imagine it in any other time—an artist just putting shapes together—shapes that represent nothing, either alone or in combination? He puts a frame around it, and

² Museum of Modern Art Bulletin, Spring, 1951.

offers it on the open market, just as a good thing to have around and look at; something that will speak to you as an independent personality, and yet is very quiet." This is a sound aesthetic, but it does not go far enough. A somewhat more revealing way of talking about abstract painting is to be found in a probing article by Harold Rosenberg in *Art News* (December, 1952).

The new American painting is not "pure art," since the extrusion of the object was not for the sake of the aesthetic. The apples weren't brushed off the table in order to make room for perfect relations of space and color. They had to go so that nothing would get in the way of the act of painting. In this gesturing with materials the aesthetic, too, has been subordinated. Form, color, composition, drawing, are auxiliaries, any one of which—or practically all, as has been attempted, logically, with unpainted canvases—can be dispensed with. What matters always is the revelation contained in the act. It is to be taken for granted that in the final effect, the image, whatever be or be not in it, will be a *tension*.

When all is said, however, there remains the stubborn thought that all works of man's imagination are a kind of conversation between the maker and the spectator; and it is hard to believe that any work of art can be without "meaning" of one kind or another, meaning with reference to a body of accepted beliefs or to cultural habits, or meaning in the sense of being a graphic representation of the modern sensibility. In abstract painting the process of symbolization, that is, of conversation, has a new and different relation to the common reservoir of experience and at times seems *not* to have evolved out of the mass experience of humanity—thus, although there seems not to be that inevitability of parity between a recognizable object and the thought or feeling for which it stands, still it is unthinkable that symbolic expression of one kind or another is not taking place. Tentatively, then, we may put forth the proposition that although abstract painting is "non-representational" and therefore non-symbolic in the communal sense (that it is rather more like music than literature), it is still a pictorial expression of the inner life of modern man. The iconography is more than personal and private; some inner excitement is being talked about on the canvas, and some innuendo, some hint, some inkling of the painter's feeling is present, integrated with life in the twentieth century and expressing with subtle verisimilitude the character of our age—the tension, the anxiety, the rejections, the search for spiritual clarity, the quest for freedom.

A Mondrian expresses himself in one way, a Legér in quite another, and among modern American abstract-expressionists a Kline, a Motherwell, a Baziotes in still other ways; yet all works of art reflect in some fashion their social and intellectual milieu through a choice of imagery which records the perception common to the age. In the case of the modern painter, the symbolic parity lies in the lines and shapes and colors so composed as to make an emotional comment on the condition of the painter himself, how it is with him, as it were, in the twentieth century.

LETTER TO A COLLEGE COMMITTEE

In spite of the widespread acceptance of the practice of art in higher education many university faculties have hesitated to include studio courses in programs in general education. Such, at first, was the situation at Northwestern, where the university's Committee on General Education failed to include any of the Art Department's studio courses in its initial list of recommended courses. Although an article by the Art Department's chairman, Professor Thomas Folds, on *The Place of Art in Higher Education* (CAJ, XV, 4) had been originally published in the *Northwestern Alumni News*, this article was not known to the Committee at the time of the meetings. Therefore the author made a further plea in the form of a letter to the members of the committee. Since other college art departments are apt to have similar situations, we quote an extensive excerpt from Mr. Folds' letter:

As the program now stands, it makes no provision for studio or laboratory classes in creative work in either art or music. My colleagues and I in the Department of Art consider this a serious omission. To be sure, the Report does include courses in the appreciation and history of art and music, but none of these provide opportunities for the student to participate in any kind of expressive work *in terms of the mediums being studied*. On the other hand, the Report does include an impressive list of oral and written interpretation of poetry, drama, and prose, as well as courses in creative and analytical writing, and in argumentation. With this thought in mind, I should like to advance here a few of the reasons why my colleagues and I believe that certain studio courses should be included in the program:

(1) The question might be asked first whether Art A20 (to mention only one of the studio courses) is, in the language of the Report, "suited for a student not primarily interested in or specially trained in the specific field represented by the course."

The answer is "yes." More than half the students enrolled in A20 are majors in other fields, or have come to A20 from Commerce, Education, Journalism, Music, Speech, and Tech. Some of the students have had a smattering of art in high school, just as some students in Basic Science have had courses in physics or chemistry before coming to Northwestern. Yet no previous training or special "talent" is required of students who take A20 any more than special talents are required of students admitted to Basic Science, Biology A10, or History A10. As I shall explain below, even students who cannot draw well in the orthodox art school academic manner can still do excellent work in this course. *Art A20 is designed for the general student.*

(2) Referring again to the Report, let us ask whether or not Art A20 is

"designed to give the student not only knowledge of part of a particular field but also some understanding of the way in which the knowledge was acquired and organized."

In some respects Art A20 is a laboratory course, but it uses the discussion method rather than formal lectures in correlating the experimental work of the student within a larger framework of knowledge. Occasionally outside reading assignments are given the class, but as a rule the students themselves write their own textbook by constructing drawings, paintings, and other objects, which later serve as material for discussion. Each week, or every two weeks on occasion, a problem is set up for investigation.

One week the problem may be to make a "realistic" drawing of an object. In the discussion which follows, members of the class discover that what seems "real" to student A may seem "unreal" to student B. Such a project also raises a question as to whether the photographic image is "real" or "unreal," and whether there is any such thing as "correct" drawing. Where one student, for example, may tend to emphasize the *edges* of objects, another may be more interested in their *masses*, or perhaps the *spaces* between; still another may exaggerate one object's size in relation to the objects around it, or flatten the background, etc. Yet each drawing may, to some extent, reflect some "realistic" aspect of the objects represented, as well as the attitude of the person making the drawing.

A second problem, usually given early in the fall quarter, involves the communication of an *idea*, such as a proverb, a title, or a slogan, in terms of shapes and colors. In the discussion period the results are examined not only for their communicability but also for *quality* of expression. In such an experiment even the student who "cannot draw a straight line" may in fact create an image of such clarity and power that it delivers the intended message with considerable impact.

In the assignment of a third problem the student is asked to create an image which expresses no idea at all, which makes no reference, in fact, to anything outside of itself. In the discussion period, however, members of the class quickly discover that each student's supposedly "abstract" painting actually contains a number of references to the "outside" world in spite of his attempts to eliminate them. The particular symbols the student has unconsciously used to make these references may then be analyzed and compared with more overt, intentional references in other drawings or paintings.

In most of the discussion sessions students raise the question as to whether or not there are absolute standards of judgment and measurement of "good" and "bad" qualities in art (or in other humanistic disciplines, for that matter). As a partial answer each student is asked to make one "good" painting and one "bad" painting, both of which are displayed on the studio wall for the discussion period. To quote my colleague, George Cohen, who is one of the teachers in A20, "The critique which follows finds deliberate

reversals of technique and content. The student's responses are seldom related to the particular intention—what was meant to be ugly may (during the discussion) be found to be moving and tragic. Each student can wonder at what he has been avoiding—the range of choice may grow, and a mobility of conception result."* At the same time he learns to examine the nature and limits of his own prejudices.

(3) Perhaps the Committee may wonder whether the discussion of some of these problems might not be carried on more efficiently in lecture courses.

In lecture courses the student stands *outside* the work of art, entering it only by means of perception and empathy. In a studio-discussion course such as Art A20, on the other hand, the student has the advantage of viewing the whole process of image-forming both from the "inside," as he participates in the creative activity of the class problems, and from the "outside," as he looks back critically at work he and his classmates have already completed. There is no substitute for this kind of double-barreled experience in a lecture course. On the contrary, the purpose of the lecture course is to bring the student into contact with a wide range of works of art, styles of art, and theories of art, mainly seen against their proper historical and cultural backgrounds. As you can see, the two types of courses tend to complement each other, just as Physics B22 (Survey of Modern Physics) complements Physics A10 (the introductory laboratory course).

(4) Since Art A20 has been referred to as a kind of laboratory course, how do the experimental methods compare with those used in a course in natural science?

In both art and science the instructor establishes a series of given factors and a goal. Let us assume, for instance, that a laboratory class in physics sets out to test the validity of Boyle's law. Before the experiment begins, the student is given certain materials, shown how to use them, how to make accurate measurements, how to interpret his findings, and finally how to evaluate the significance of this experiment in relation to other related knowledge within the field of physics.

Now whatever "discoveries" the student makes in a science laboratory at the introductory level are already known in advance to the instructor. One of the aims of the laboratory methods of teaching in an elementary science course is to arrive at as much standardization of human action as possible in the use of instruments, the measurement and documentation of data, and the logical processes of both induction and deduction in checking the results against the theory being tested. In the science laboratory all the students are required to *rehearse a series of acts which have already been performed before*, perhaps hundreds or thousands of times, by other people.

* A statement of Professor Cohen's classroom methods in Art A20 at Northwestern, as well as the philosophy behind them, was featured in the November issue of the magazine *Arts*.

Since the aims of art are very different from those of science, their methods and purposes of experimentation also have little in common. The main purpose of applying controls in a problem given to an art class, for instance, is to bring out as much as possible the *individuality* of different solutions. This means that although the instructor in a studio class may know in a general way what to expect from his students, he is also in for a number of surprises, because the solutions to the class problem will contain not only revelations of individual aptitudes but also demonstrations by the students of genuine *discoveries* they have made. Much of the subsequent class discussion, therefore, centers on a comparative analysis of the various "solutions," on questions as to their validity, and on relationships between what has happened in the studio and what has happened in the world of art outside.

(5) Many college teachers in other fields who haven't kept up with the developments in modern art during the past fifty years assume that the work turned out in college studios is ugly and meaningless. Whether any members of your committee fall into this category, I don't know; but it might be worthwhile here to refer to two or three more types of problems given in our A20 course as a refutation of this charge.

After the fall quarter, which is devoted mostly to problems involving drawing, painting, and collage, the class turns to a number of experiments with various materials in three dimensions. In one experiment the students work for two two-hour periods making objects or figures out of clay. The instructor then plays the part of a slick commercial artist and gives a critique from the point of view of "pleasing the public," during which he ruthlessly rejects certain pieces as "commercially unacceptable." Inevitably this leads to a lively discussion, in which the students are forced to defend what they consider to be the genuinely "good" qualities of their own work. In this problem students are graded primarily for their ability to analyze the problem and to discuss the results intelligently rather than for technical skill shown in making the objects themselves. Consequently, the objects created in class would hold little meaning for outsiders, who have not had the advantage of studying the problem from the beginning.

In another problem the aim is to learn how to exploit the structural qualities of a material. The assignment is the making of a structure out of wire, using as little wire as possible, which will support a small steel drawer 6" off the floor. Some students use five times as much wire as others and yet fail to build a suitable support. In the discussion period all results are compared and tested. Some also are admired—as much for the expressive quality of their design as for their structural efficiency. Obviously this experiment provides an exciting approach to the understanding of various problems in modern architecture and industrial design. Shouldn't every Tech student have this experience?

In another assignment given during the winter quarter, the class works

with pieces of colored paper, learning how to make colors appear to change their hue, value, and intensity according to their area (amount), placement, and relation to other colors. As the experiment proceeds, each student discovers that hues show up better against black than against white, whereas the reverse is generally true when values are being considered. After other experiments with color the class is assigned a research problem in the manipulation of light. Following a study of the visible properties of light, such as refraction, reflection, diffusion, etc., each student makes a series of objects which *display* some of these properties. Eventually the efficiency and the dramatic qualities of the displays themselves come under scrutiny.

In the spring quarter the class turns to a more prolonged series of experiments in conventional methods of drawing—in one and two-point perspective, oblique projection, isometric projection, and orthographic projection. This is accomplished mostly on a freehand basis, though mechanical drawing instruments are also used briefly. But since the purpose is *to develop understanding rather than to train skills*, these exercises have little in common with the methods used in the conventional mechanical drawing course. Moreover, some of the problems in this series include a study of anatomy and figure drawing from life.

In general, then, the main purpose of a course such as Art A20 is to give the student an opportunity to make a serious study of (a) himself, his own prejudices, and his creative aptitudes; (b) the world of color, light, shape, and texture in both art and nature; (c) the nature and purpose of creative activity in the arts. Ironically enough, if the Art Department wished to attract the support of those people who criticize it for apparently teaching the students how to make "meaningless" abstract pictures, it could easily do so by regimenting the studio work until it resembled the conventional stuff ground out in art academies two generations ago. This might prove more "acceptable" to skeptical teachers in other disciplines, but it would have little to do with the aims and purpose of a college education.

For these reasons we ask that the Committee on General Education consider the addition of our introductory studio course, Art A20, to its recommended program of courses—Thomas M. Folds.

Shortly after receiving this letter, the members of the Committee agreed that a studio course of this kind was not specialized. As a result, the Department's basic course in the practice of art is now included in the committee's Program of Recommended Courses in General Education.

KARL EPHRAIM WESTON (1874-1956)

Throughout his long and useful life, Karl Ephraim Weston was identified with Williams College, where he served as Amos Lawrence professor of art and director of the Lawrence Art Museum, which he founded. As his natural modesty made him shun publicity almost by instinct, he was much less well known, in circles beyond Berkshire County, than his achievement merited. Through several generations of students, however, the perceptive and urbane training in liberal arts which he gave made itself felt in many parts of the world and in many walks of life.

At home, by personal example, he affected the lives of all who knew him. He was kindly but not sentimental, witty but not caustic, ever more youthful as he grew older in years and in wisdom, joyously loyal to friends, to his community, to his college and his church. Both he and Mrs. Weston, the former Ruth Sabin of Williamstown, took an active personal interest in the welfare of their town.

Born in Winchendon, Mass., Prof. Weston graduated from Williams in 1896. Although he was trained in Romanic languages at Johns Hopkins, and the Sorbonne, and in classical studies at the American School in Rome, his broad cultivation made him the obvious choice to succeed Richard Austin Rice, founder of the study of art-history at Williams, upon the latter's retirement. Appointed professor of the history of art and civilization in 1912, he spent a sabbatical year in study at Princeton University and in Europe. For the next 15 years he taught the history of art single-handed until mounting enrollment in his courses made necessary the addition of an instructor to assist him, and an addition to Lawrence Hall to contain his students. At a time when the field enjoyed no such nationwide boom as is now in evidence he attracted on the average of over half of the entire student body to his instruction. It was his idea that Lawrence Hall, the college's former library, intrinsically

beautiful as an example of Greek Revival architecture, should be remodeled to become its first museum. It was he who attracted so many gifts to the Lawrence Art Museum that further galleries had to be constructed. When he retired in 1940, the department numbered three teachers, offered a major, and enrolled as many as 100 students each year in the introductory course which he conducted, always on an optional basis. A grateful alma mater awarded him the honorary degree of doctor of humane letters, and presented him with the Rogerson Cup, symbolizing distinction in his career and loyalty to the college.

For Karl Weston, retirement meant no cessation to his lifelong interests. Until 1948 he continued to direct the Lawrence Art Museum. When the United States entered the Second World War and the entire teaching staff of the Art Department went into service in 1942, he returned as an active member of the department and contrived to bring the academic year to orderly conclusion. During the war period he also served as an alumni trustee of the college.

Prof. Weston was instrumental in the decision by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Sterling Clark to place their extraordinary collection of art in Williamstown, and he served on the board of directors which they founded. By a touch of irony his death coincided with the recent opening of the institute's major gallery.

Although he was best known at Williams for his introductory courses, many of his students took advanced work with him and went on to careers in teaching and museum work. Teachers on the faculties of Harvard, Oberlin, Barnard, the University of Pennsylvania, American University (Washington, D.C.), and the University of Buffalo—not to mention half of the present Art Department at Williams—and the directors of the art museums of Detroit, Buffalo, Pittsburgh, Oberlin, and San Diego all gratefully attribute to his instruction the awakening

of their interest and the formation their taste.

One of these directors, Gordon B. Washburn, of the Department of Fine Arts, Carnegie Institute, recently wrote.

"When I think of him, which is often, I remember his modesty before anything else. He never claimed to know the answers, but he never failed to pose the questions which kept you thinking about his subject from day to day and week to week. Other teachers gave their opinions, but he offered his uncertainties, a far more provocative offering. Which of us who studied with him will ever forget his gentleness, or his distinction as an individual and a gentleman? I never later met anyone with so little vanity or so much good will as I pursued my studies in the same field. Karl Weston's selflessness was of such distinction that I never discovered its like again."

His delight in telling the following story about himself is to the point here. Learning from a friend that he was mentioned in a book of memories by E. F. Benson, he searched its pages. Finally he discovered himself among the names of Mr. Benson's callers on a certain occasion as "a Mr. Karl E. Weston—who is he?"

Enthusiasm was surely the primary

source of his effectiveness as a teacher, but scholarship gave it depth and certainty. An early interest in research always remained a guiding principle. In the last year of his life the Chapin Library of Williams College devoted a special exhibition to the watercolor and ink copies he had made, 50 years earlier, of the Terence manuscripts in the Vatican, the Bibliotheque Nationale, the Ambrosiana, and the Bodleian Library. His publication, "The Illustrated Terence Manuscripts," in Harvard Studies in Philology (1903), was often cited by subsequent scholars in this field.

In themselves, these drawings were an important part of his contribution to learning; but to those who knew Karl Weston they are also a silent reminder of his sensibility, his tact, and his exquisite taste.

S. LANE FAISON, JR.
Williams College

ELIZABETH NOTTINGHAM DAY

Elizabeth Nottingham Day, prominent Virginia painter, Professor of Art at Mary Baldwin College, died in April. In 1930 she won a Tiffany Foundation Fellowship. In 1931 she won the Edward G. McDowell Traveling Scholarship while a student at the Art Students League.

GOLDEN REEL FILM FESTIVAL

The third annual Golden Reel Festival, sponsored by the Film Council of America, took place in Chicago on April 23-27. Once again I had the honor of being invited as one of a dozen jurors charged with picking the "best" and "second best" films in the "Visual Arts" category. As usual, we picked them blind, so to speak, on a numerical basis, without previous agreement on standards, without discussion, and with approximation to the officially stated purpose as the major criterion. The Film Council, however, has come to realize that such

statements are often specious and *ex post facto*, and it now concedes the jurors' right to apply qualitative and subjective standards.

Of the eleven films shown in this category, three did not belong. This raises all sorts of questions about who is responsible for the proper definition of categories and for assigning the right films to them. All I wish to point out here is that mis-assignment of this sort is very unfair to the films in question, as the jurors automatically rule them out, regardless of quality. For the sake of

the record let me say, first, that at least two of them have some connection with the arts: *Hercules*, produced by the Weston Wood Studio, is an excellent film about a children's book. Why the Film Council has never seen fit to open a category devoted to films for children has always been a mystery to me. *A Story of Silver*, glorifying the House of Jensen, is a cross between a documentary and an advertising item. The third film, *The Pirogue Maker*, has beautiful photography but its emphasis on craftsmanship places it either among documentaries or films devoted to folk customs.

Upon considering the remaining eight films, I must say before all else that the state of the film on art in America today is not only parlous but anemic. Are we to believe that only one good film on any aspect of visual art was made in this country in the 1954-1955 period covered by the Festival? This particular film, which is *Color Lithography, An Art Medium*, turned out to be the prize-winner. It was made by the University of Mississippi Audio-Visual Center, with the collaboration of their Art Department. Reginald Neal wrote the script and speaks it as he demonstrates his technique. The film is well paced, handsomely photographed, and is altogether a credit to its makers. It is absurd to think, however, that the collectively mathematical judgment of the jury regarded it as better than Luciano Emmer's *Picasso* (distributed by Contemporary Films, New York). The whole vacant absurdity of making awards, which certainly carry a great deal of commercial prestige, on the basis of comparing horses with peonies, is once again demonstrated, and the sop of "honorable mention" or "certificate of merit" is more of an insult than anything else.

We did have the chance to compare Emmer's *Picasso* with Haesaerts' *Visit to Picasso*, submitted by Fleetwood Films, its distributor, and to see that while the two films complement each other in a sense, the Italian work is much more comprehensive than the Belgian one, has the advantage of being in color and is

relatively free of the kind of gimmicks that Haesaerts so fondly loves. In both films, for instance, we see Picasso at work, and it is a wonderful experience. In Emmer's film he is starting a mural. In *Visit* he is shown facing the panes of plexiglas on which he improvises drawings with white paint. The later mode is such a sensational idea that one's judgment is temporarily blotted out. Yet when you think about it you realize that it is mostly a stunt which does not tell you too much about Picasso's real technique. Emmer is not a professional art historian and art critic like Haesaerts, which I would consider a distinct asset in his case, as he concentrates on what is visually interesting, without bothering with intellectual overtones. The two men are not in a true sense rivals, and while I cannot help being impressed with Haesaert's achievements I don't think that he is the natural film man that a considerably less sophisticated figure like Emmer is.

These two European art films are so superior to anything done (in very recent times, at least) on this continent that the outlook seems very discouraging. Take for example Jack Calderwoods' film called *Karl Knaths' Cape Cod*. It is an attempt to explain the painter in terms of his normal environment. We have one excellent film made on this pattern: Robert Gardner's *Mark Tobey*. If we compare it to the Knaths film, we see how an intelligent approach to the question of environment, that is, an approach based primarily on a cinematographic solution of the problem, can convince the viewer that habitat helps to form the artist's inner vision. The Knaths film merely stresses the obvious, that Knaths uses Cape Cod material. The point is made repeatedly, but since it is always made the same way and since it was not very profoundly handled to begin with, we are apt to be more bored than edified. No canvas of Knaths' is ever shown in its entirety. Bits from various works are lumped together, the similarity of theme being the binder. The artist himself appears, but there is little revelation of personality as we can experience it in the Tobey film or in either of the

Picasso films mentioned above. This film has something in common also with an older one made about another American artist, Philip Evergood: neither of them does justice to its principal, and both make the artists seem so uninteresting as to defeat their very purpose.

There were two films using Japanese motifs. *Tara, the Stonecutter*, purports to "recreate the dramatic art of Utamaro and Hiroshige" in terms of animation. It is so bad that it is not worth discussing. *The Constant Geisha*, produced by the Walter P. Lewisohn Associates, is a serious attempt to interpret the meaning of the Kabuki Theatre by photographing some famous prints. The material used is of high quality, but for the rest, I should say that the author does not know the Kabuki Theatre very well and that the director produced a series of moving slides rather than a film. It definitely failed in its purpose to show that "Japanese Kabuki Theater prints are as dynamic and dramatic as the theater itself."

An *Animation Workshop Package*, consisting of three films produced by various graduate students in the U.C.L.A. Motion Picture Department, was amusing and appealing, even though somewhat lacking in originality and obviously aimed at the nearest employer. Of the three, Pederson's *The Animal Education of Ashley Smith*, done in the UFA style, has the cleverest bite, and *The Princess and the Pea*, based on drawings by children, is the most engaging.

Canada contributed *The Jolifou Inn*. I can only say that, as usual, superior technique and brilliant editing have been placed at the service of second-, or even

third-rate material.

An opportunity was afforded at the end of the film showings to hold a post-mortem. Those of us who stayed and took part found the occasion profitable. I had the feeling that most of us have come to share the opinion that the film on art has not begun to fulfill its potentialities, and that it is high time something were done about it.

What that something is might well be a decision on the part of the most articulate of the art film's critics, i.e., the members of the College Art Association, to say to all possible producers and makers: we need a specific kind of films, which must conform to such and such specifications and obey certain standards. We will support any programme of film production which looks as if it had artistic and educative aims rather than commercial ones. Our recent questionnaire to the membership proved that interest in the film on art as a teaching medium is widespread to the point of deserving to be defined as enthusiasm. At the same time, discouragement about the difficulty of obtaining good films, their cost, and the disappointment frequently caused by the failure of quality, make it imperative that a broad and sweeping attack on the problem be launched. There is no doubt in my mind that there exists a vacuum in this area which we are morally bound to fill. If the leading teachers of art in the country do not assume the leadership in developing the most potentially useful instrument ever invented, who shall?

THEODORE BOWIE
Indiana University

ON PRESERVATION¹

In a recent issue, *Life Magazine* carried a report about damages supposedly suffered by the famous Dresden pictures while in hiding during the war and during their captivity in Russia. For years I have been concerned with the many

dangers that beset our artistic heritage; hence, I should have been delighted to see a great magazine give space to a subject so close to my heart. Actually, I was disappointed, for while there is indeed widespread destruction of art, the Dresden pictures were a poor case to choose. From all the evidence that I

¹ Reprinted from *Barnard Alumnae Magazine*, May, 1956.

could gather it appears that they were returned in surprisingly good condition.

Yet, the issue of preservation of works of art is a burning one; ignorance, negligence, and irresponsibility combine to cause damage and often irreparable loss. None of this ever finds its way into popular magazines, and I suspect that the piece about the Dresden pictures was printed less for real concern with the problems involved than as a good weapon in the propaganda battles of the Cold War. As such a weapon, I fear it will boomerang. Worse, many people will get the impression that, while the Russians may be careless, and perhaps incompetent, in the preservation of masterpieces we can rest comfortably assured that everything is under control and in fine shape in the rest of the world.

Unfortunately, it is not. Let us forget, if we can, that there are certain situations when destruction of art is inevitable, as in fires, earthquakes, floods. Let us even admit that in wars it is difficult to protect all works of art adequately, though there is evidence that during the last war much was destroyed, on both sides, which could have been saved with a little more thought and care.

I am convinced that in the dribbling, but constant decimation during years of peace, as much or more is lost as in the holocausts of war. It is just not spectacular enough to make news. If a lady burns the portraits of her ancestors on the barbecue grill of her country estate because she thinks that no one will care for them anyhow after she is gone; if a greedy art dealer carves up an over-sized old master into several small morsels, easier to sell, and throws out what remainders there are as a butcher does trimmed-off bones; if a book-dealer multiplies his profits by dismembering an illuminated manuscript in order to sell each leaf separately; if a museum attendant conscientiously dusts the surfaces of old panels, regularly wiping loose particles of color into his dustbin, no one turns a hair. Yet, all those who are involved in art are diminished by the death of any one work; and if a clod of color

"bee washed away" by crooks or unskilled handlers, our cultural heritage "is the lesse."

The very people into whose hands works of art are committed for their care often contribute to their destruction. There are many quacks who call themselves "restorers."

In recent years perhaps the greatest single danger to old paintings is cleaning; chemicals in unskilled or irresponsible hands may affect the pigments themselves. Paintings so damaged are called overcleaned or abraded. This may sound harmless enough. Actually, the top-layer of a painting is the one which the artist intended to be seen. Pictures deprived of part or all of this layer have lost their skin and at best have no more than "anatomical" interest. They often are painted over by "restorers" to hide the damage. If these additions are recognized as such, the painting may again go to the cleaner and the trouble be compounded.

There are other dangers. On my travels abroad I have visited many churches and small museums where paintings hung on damp walls or in places where they were bound to be rubbed, scratched, and pierced. I have seen pictures even in large museums whose paint-film was peeling off (blistering). I remember a Spanish church where, covered with dust in a corner of the sacristy, lay the fragments of a statue (a good one) which had fallen down; I presume it has now been carted away as rubble.

It is not that there are not enough people who know how to treat works of art, though there surely is place for many more. It is not that there is not enough money to pay for upkeep and proper attention, though admittedly much, much more is needed.

Here, if anywhere, is a field for international action. The United Nations, through such organizations as UNESCO, might set up training centers for restorers and it could organize a world-wide first-aid service, available free of charge or at a nominal fee, wherever help is needed and welcomed. Existing technical institu-

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tions, at present generally attached to museums, could liberalize their policies so that their knowledge and services would be more readily available to the outside public. At present many of them are too much occupied with technical experimentation and with highly specialized problems. Like hospitals, they should have not only research departments but clinics and first-aid stations as well.

What is needed, too, is some sort of legislation which recognizes that works of art need protection against commercial exploitation and private arbitrariness. Restorers should be licensed and a clearly defined code of ethics should govern their work. Dealers ought to be held respon-

sible for the integrity of the treasures which go through their hands, at least those above a set minimum value. They as well as the restorers ought to be obliged to keep records about what is done to the works of art while they have them. Insofar as they represent values belonging to all civilized people, works of art, even in private collections, are to some extent in the public domain. Maybe it is too much to hope that our legislators will abridge any of the rights of private property for nothing else than the protection of spiritual and cultural values. If legislation is not available, education may help.

JULIUS J. HELD
Barnard College

THE HARPUR INDEX OF MASTER'S THESES

Kenneth C. Lindsay

The Harpur Index of Master's Theses in Art written at American institutions of higher learning has been compiled in order to put the titles of art theses into bibliographical circulation. By placing this group of titles before the academic world, the theses may then enjoy a circulation that will extend beyond the libraries where they are kept on file, serve as an aid to future guidance, and enable the graduate student to select his topic in a more scholarly manner. It does not seem economically feasible to publish the report—which was completed last year—in book form. However, the author has been encouraged to make the study available on microcard.

Seventy-six institutions reported a total of 2168 theses written between 1876 and 1953. The theses are listed chronologically in the Index. Theses dealing with historical subjects have been indexed (it can be found, for instance, that seven theses have been written on the Armory Show). The data has been analyzed statistically and furnishes a precise record of art growth in this country on one particular level. From this data we can conclude:

1. The number of master's theses has increased considerably in the absolute

sense. This increase began during the early nineteen-twenties and since then the number of theses written has quadrupled.

2. Viewed in relation to the rate of change of master's degrees earned in all fields, the writing of master's theses in art generally increased up until the end of the last war. Since 1944 the output decreased in relative importance at approximately the same rate at which it had previously increased. In other words we might say that art gained in academic importance between 1920 and 1944 and since then has begun to decline. The position it held in 1953 is about the same as in 1935.

3. Between 1948 and 1954 we find, percentage-wise, that:

a. The number of MA degrees earned decreased in the field of the fine arts but not as rapidly as in English and history.

b. In the process of turning masters into doctors English and history tended to grow well above the average rate, while the fine arts increased at a slower pace than the average for all fields. (The data for these conclusions were drawn from governmental reports. The data there presented of *degrees earned in the fine arts* must be differ-

entiated from that in the Harpur Index which deals only with *written theses in art.*)

4. In terms of written master's theses, art may no longer be called a traditionally feminine field. This has been a pronounced change, while, according to governmental studies, the general shifting of the sexes within other tradition-bound fields has been gradual.

5. By extending the trend lines of written master's theses in art we can estimate that 164 and 210 theses will be written in 1960 and 1970 respectively.

6. Seventy-four theses were not written because of the military dislocation of the second World War.

7. By projecting trends we may make the following estimates:

a. By 1960, eight more schools will be reporting written master's theses in art and by 1970, nineteen more.

b. By 1960, the number of theses reported by each institution will average 3.85 and by 1970, 4.73.

8. Between 1924 and 1953 there has been a decisive relative decrease of interest in master of art theses in the history of art. However, theses in the creative and applied fields have relatively increased. The relative increase in art education theses has been slight.

9. There has been a changing emphasis of art historical interest. The classical bias of 19th century American education carried over to the early 20th century. Breaking the period of 1925 to 1950 down into five year spans, we find the following areas have been stressed:

1925-1929	Renaissance
1930-1934	Medieval
1935-1939	American
1940-1944	American
1945-1950	American

We can also conclude:

a. The field of the rococo has held little interest for American students.

b. There has been a recent (1950-1953) rise of interest in aesthetics and method.

10. Though the number of institutions reporting written theses in art increases in the absolute sense, certain changes are noticeable:

a. When the writing of theses is made optional there is usually a drop-off of thesis writing.

b. There is a growing avoidance of the written thesis by means of course-substitution or optional plans. In certain cases a thesis may be avoided by substituting a certain amount of class hours. One school reported that they were forced into this policy in order to compete with others schools who had it. The optional plan varies, but essentially it enables the student to choose between a written thesis or a creative project. Some teachers have indicated that after the optional plan was established, very few students were attracted by the written critical thesis.

c. Depending upon the institution, the creative project may or may not be accompanied by a written discussion or short résumé of the student's philosophical approach.

11. Regional summary:

Region	No. of institutions reporting	History	Percentages		Applied	Total
			Creative	Education		
New England	7	12.15	.00	2.34	.00	7.33
Middle Atlantic	9	30.18	1.95	10.10	6.12	19.82
East North Central	15	29.58	54.60	36.03	52.24	37.39
West North Central	6	7.92	12.26	4.71	6.94	8.08
South Atlantic	8	5.79	5.29	2.02	2.86	4.84
East South Central	3	.98	1.95	1.35	3.26	1.46
West South Central	6	2.53	10.03	12.48	12.24	6.29
Mountain	7	5.22	9.47	20.88	9.80	8.60
Pacific	7	5.71	4.46	10.10	6.53	6.20
			100	100	100	100

NEWS REPORTS

Southeastern College Art Conference

THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI was host to the 15th Annual meeting of the Southern College Art Conference last April 19, 20, and 21. The Program Chairman was Reginald H. Neal, Chairman of the Department of Art, University of Mississippi.

The Friday morning session was devoted to a lively panel discussion of "The Significance of Subject in Contemporary Art." The discussion centered around the fiery remarks of Herman Cherry, New York artist, and Selden Rodman, author of a recent book calling upon the artist to return to significant content. The afternoon session presented new films on the Graphic Arts, a paper on "Early American Lithographs" by John Carey, and a panel on "The Renaissance in Printmaking." The conference banquet speaker, Dr. Henry R. Hope of Indiana University, presented a critical survey of "Contemporary Sculpture" and Dr. David M. Robinson of the University

of Mississippi faculty entertained the guests with personal reminiscences of his illustrious career in the field of Art and Archaeology.

A surprise came on Saturday morning when Dr. George E. Mylonas of Washington University presented his inspiring illustrated lecture on "Pre-Historic Greece: Minoan and Mycenaean Art" to an appreciative audience that interrupted his remarks with spontaneous applause. The final session under the Chairmanship of Dr. Clemens Sommer of the University of North Carolina did a successful job of sleuthing on a number of unfamiliar art objects to determine their authenticity.

The business meeting was presided over by Mr. George Cress, University of Chattanooga, and the elected officers for next year are: Reginald H. Neal, President; Gulnar Bosch, Vice President; and Clinton Adams, Program Chairman and host for the conference next year.

Art News from The Pacific Northwest

The School of Architecture and Allied Arts of the University of Oregon is in the midst of an extensive building program that includes the remodeling of two structures previously in use for classrooms, studios and drafting rooms, and the erection of an entirely new unit which will incorporate the two earlier structures and afford beyond them the most up-to-date accommodations for professional training in the various branches of the visual arts, together with a reference library and a large lecture hall providing the best possible facilities for the presentation of lantern slides and motion pictures. It is expected that the building

will be ready for occupancy at some time during the school year of 1956-57.

Thomas C. Colt, Jr., recently resigned his position as Director of the Portland Art Museum, a Museum which operates concurrently a professional art school. No one has been appointed as yet to succeed Mr. Colt.

The Oregon Art Alliance, a statewide organization of art departments and art schools in educational institutions, art teachers in the public schools, professional artists, and community art centers, was initiated by Mr. Colt during his directorship of the Portland Art Museum and conducted up until the present

as an affiliate of the Portland Art Association, with the Portland Art Museum serving as continuing institutional Secretary-Treasurer. The Oregon Art Alliance met for its annual spring meeting at the Portland Art Museum, April 28, 1956. Representatives of the member-organizations present at this meeting completed their recommendations for the tenth redraft of Senate Bill 300 (a copy of the tenth redraft is enclosed for whatever use it may serve in preparation of the news item), 1955 session of the Oregon State Legislature, a bill under consideration by a joint committee of the House and Senate of the Oregon State Legislature, providing for the establishment of an Oregon Fine Arts Commission consisting of an executive board of 3 members and 2 advisory committees of 5 members each, one representing the visual arts and the other music, appointed by the Governor of the State. The Oregon Art Alliance is officially endorsing Senate Bill 300 and actively engaged in the effort to secure legislative action on it. (I enclose a list of names of the trustees of the Oregon Art Alliance, in case you want to use it in whole or in part.) At the meeting delegates elected new trustees to replace those retiring or resigning. At the annual meeting of the preceding year, Wallace S. Baldinger, Professor of the History of Art and Director of the Museum of Art of the University of Oregon, ended two years of service as President of the Oregon Art Alliance. At the annual meeting in the spring of 1954 he had been elected Honorary President for life. His successor as President, Mrs. R. A. Law, of the Coos Artists' League in Coos Bay, Oregon, is now serving her second year in the capacity of President. The annual fall meeting of the organization is to be held in Grants Pass and Ashland on October 26 and 27, 1956.

The Western Association of Art Museum Directors met in Seattle July 26-28, 1956, at the Seattle Art Museum, and at the Museum of History and Industry and the Henry Gallery, both of the University

of Washington. At these meetings a proposal was made for a radical change in the constitution of the organization. If ballot by mail results in favorable action on the proposed changes, the organization will be known as the Western Art Museums Association, open to active membership by museums, public galleries and college and university museums or galleries, located in states west of the Mississippi River and in the Territories of Alaska and Hawaii and in the Canadian Provinces of British Columbia and Alberta. Officers of the organization as elected at these meetings are as follows: Gervais Reed, Curator of the Henry Gallery, University of Washington—President; Paul Mills, Curator of the Oakland Municipal Art Museum, Oakland, California—Vice-President; Wallace S. Baldinger, Director, Museum of Art, University of Oregon—Secretary; Mrs. Ala Story, Director, Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, California—Treasurer.

The University of Oregon is planning an ambitious Festival of the Arts, February 1-May 31, 1957. The theme for the Festival is **EAST MEETS WEST**. It will embrace not only feature exhibitions in the Museum of Art of the University of Oregon but public lectures by members of the University faculty and visiting authorities, concerts, dance recitals, play productions, motion pictures, etc. The cultures of India as well as of China and of Japan will be represented in all phases of the four-months-long program. The Festival inaugurates an era of intensified usefulness of the Museum to the educational program of the University of Oregon.

Gordon Gilkey, Head of the Department of Art, Oregon State College, Corvallis, Oregon, organized an exhibition, **100 CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN PRINTS**, as an American representation in the International Biennial Show in Bordighera, Italy, held in August, 1956, and subsequently circulated through European countries. He has been active in bringing to the United States for two

years of circulation in this country exhibitions of contemporary prints from France, Italy, Germany and the British Isles, respectively. A catalogue is expected to accompany each show. The fee for a showing of each exhibition is set

at \$100. Institutions interested in engaging one or more of these exhibitions should communicate with Mr. Gilkey.

WALLACE S. BALDINGER
University of Oregon

General

A Kresge Foundation gift of \$1,500,000 will provide a new Kresge Art Center at Michigan State University. The building will be designed and planned by Ralph R. Calder of Detroit, architect of many of the newer buildings on the M.S.U. campus. It will incorporate galleries, studios and offices for the art department, and also classrooms for instruction not immediately associated with the study of art. M.S.U. begins a permanent collection of contemporary American painting to occupy its new galleries with the purchase of Abraham Rattner's oil painting *Potato Farmscape Number 5 with Figure*. Augmenting this are two oils presented by J. L. Hudson Co. of Detroit: Arnold Blanch's *The Forest*, and John DeMarrelly's *Bulls and Barns*.

Lamar Dodd, University of Georgia, is directing a project financed by the Carnegie Corporation to survey and collect material for the teaching of American art. This will include a series of color film transparencies covering every phase including architecture, city planning, painting, sculpture, photography, stage design and visual communications.

Cooper Union Art School is expanding its architecture courses with the intention of eventually establishing a degree-granting curriculum. This fall the addition of a fourth year in the day session of the school's department of architecture makes it possible for students to complete a free four-year architecture course. They may then fulfill degree requirements by taking an additional year of work at a degree-granting school of architecture. Expansion of the art school curriculum eventually will include degree-granting courses for all of the 350 students in

both the department of architecture and the department of design. Goal for the expansion is 1959, Cooper Union's 100th anniversary year.

From the Towle Silversmiths, manufacturers of sterling holloware and flatware in Newburyport, Massachusetts, the following announcement; The company is offering a fellowship to a student of three dimensional design who will complete his or her schooling in the Spring of 1957. The fellowship will run from September 1957 through August 1958 and consists of:

1. One year's work in Towle's product development department on salary. This department plans, designs and develops all Towle products and concerns itself with factory methods and production problems.

2. Trips for design research (all expenses paid)

- a) One or more trips to New England factories.
- b) One or more trips to nearby Boston or other New England cultural centers to see museum exhibitions.
- c) One week in New York City.
- d) Attendance at the International Design Conference, Aspen, Colorado.

Candidates for this fellowship are invited to write to William De Hart, Director of Design, Towle Silversmiths, Newburyport, Massachusetts.

Congratulations to the University of Michigan's Museum of Art for its especially interesting April *Bulletin*.

Sponsored by the Educational Television and Radio Center at Ann Arbor, Michigan, narrated by Gordon Bailey Washburn, Fine Art Director of Carnegie Institute, and produced by Robert

Snyder, a series of twelve 16mm kine-scope films, "Looking at Modern Art," are available from Indiana University's Audio-Visual Center, Bloomington, Indiana. The films are about 30 minutes long, rent for one to five days for \$3.50 each, and can be purchased at \$100.00 per print.

At June commencements, honorary degrees to art personnel included a Doctor of Humanities degree to James J. Rorimer, director of the Metropolitan Museum, from Western Reserve University; and a Doctor of Fine Arts degree to Grace McCann Morley, director of the San Francisco Museum of Art, from the California College of Arts and Crafts.

The design department of Southern Illinois University has proposed to build the world's largest geodesic dome structure for its campus home and a future Design Research Institute.

R. Buckminster Fuller recently conducted a series of lectures for advanced design students at SIU. The students are probing the mathematics of building the structure, a 167-foot diameter quarter-

sphere which would cover half an acre of ground. Fuller says the structure, larger than the dome of St. Peter's cathedral in Rome, will be the biggest he has ever attempted.

Harold Cohen, head of the SIU design department, is appealing to research and industry throughout the nation for the estimated \$75,000 it will cost to build and equip the dome. It will be constructed of aluminum ribs with a transparent plastic "skin." Students of product, shelter and visual design will work under the dome when it is completed. Fuller and Cohen envision the dome's inside area (some 23,000 square feet) as a "controlled environment," with trees and grass and shrubbery growing in portions not covered by slab. Plans originally had called for the research center to be housed in six separate small domes. After arriving on the campus Fuller proposed the large single dome. Fuller, who also is working on plans for a massive dome over Ebbets Field in Brooklyn, calls the SIU project "an enormous amplification of everything I've done up to now."

Personnel

Ben Shahn has been named Charles Eliot Norton Professor of Poetry at Harvard University for 1956-57, under the provision of the grant which defines poetry in its original Greek sense to include "all poetic expression in language, music or the fine arts."

Professor James R. Shipley has been named head of the University of Illinois art department. He takes over a department which has reached a new high with 36 full-time faculty members and 15 teaching assistants.

Siena Heights College, Adrian, Michigan, has a new artist-in-residence, sculptor Joseph O'Connell.

F. Carlton Ball returns to his alma mater, the University of Southern California, this fall as professor of ceramics. He will help set up a new ceramics course of study emphasizing training of

graduate students in ceramic design for industry, architectural ceramics, and the training of pottery teachers.

At Michigan State University, Mariska Karasz, noted designer and craftsman, was summer guest instructor. Abraham Rattner joins the faculty to serve as artist-in-residence this fall. Martin Soria, on an additional year's leave, will continue work on *The Art of Spain, Portugal and Their Dominions 1550-1850*, co-authored with Professor George Kubler, Chairman of the Department of Art History, Yale University.

Herwin Schaeffer resigned his position as Director of the Museum of American Crafts to join the faculty of the department of decorative arts, University of California at Berkeley. John French resigned from the department in June to accept the chairmanship of the art de-

partment at San José State College, filling the vacancy left by the retirement of Professor Reitzel.

Dario Covi joined the staff of the Allen R. Hite Art Institute in September as assistant professor of the history of art. At Louisville he replaced Creighton Gilbert, who has been appointed to the fine arts department at Indiana University. Justus Bier, director of the Hite Institute, has been awarded a second Guggenheim Fellowship for 1956-57, and is continuing his studies of Tilmann Riemenschneider in Germany. He left for Berlin in April and lectured on Riemenschneider at the Free University of Berlin during the summer. Acting director of the Institute is Walter Creese who spent 1955-56 at the University of Liverpool studying city planning under a Fulbright grant. Edgard Pillet, who came in September, 1955, from Paris to be visiting professor of painting and sculpture, is teaching this fall at the Art Institute of Chicago. Ulfert Wilke, associate professor of painting is resuming his teaching in Louisville after a year as visiting professor at the University of Georgia.

At Washington University, St. Louis, Professor George E. Mylonas, at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, 1955-56, returned this fall to the chairmanship of the department of art and archaeology. Professor Mylonas has been preparing two books on his recent finds at Mycenae and at Eleusis where he continued his excavations this summer. Professor Frederick Hartt, acting chairman in the absence of Dr. Mylonas, also spent the summer in Europe, investigating questions connected with his book on Giulio Romano and his monograph on Andrea del Castagno. Dr. Hartt was the recipient of a research grant from the university for these projects. Assistant Professor J. Edward Kidder, Jr., has accepted a three year appointment at International Christian University in Tokyo. The department carries out a long contemplated expansion of its graduate lecture and seminar courses with three new appointments. Dr.



William McGee: Drawing, 1955. Mr. McGee has just joined the staff of Brown University as instructor of drawing and painting.

Richard Edwards of Brandeis University, has been appointed associate professor of Hunter College, and Robert Jordan of the history of art; Norris K. Smith of Wheaton College are newly appointed assistant professors.

On July 1, Khosrov Ajootian succeeded James C. Boudreau as Dean of Pratt Institute's Art School.

Thomas J. McCormick, Jr. is the new director of the Robert Hull Fleming Museum and assistant professor of art at the University of Vermont succeeding Alan Gowans who has become chairman of the art department at the University of Delaware.

Visiting lecturers for the summer session at Syracuse University included George Grosz, Karl Zerbe, Zoltan Sepeshy, Viktor Lowenfeld, and Rosemary Beyer.

Miss Jaquelin Ambler, Assistant Supervisor of Education at the City Art Museum of St. Louis has been awarded a Fulbright research grant to study Buddhist sculpture of the Gandharan region

in Pakistan. Miss Ambler will be an affiliated student of the University of Karachi.

She first became interested in this field by studying examples of Gandharan sculpture in the St. Louis museum.

This is the first time, it is believed, that a Fulbright Grant has been given to a member of the educational staff of an art museum. Miss Ambler has her Master's Degree from Washington University. She will be in Pakistan for a period of nine months beginning in September.

Miss June-Marie Fink has been appointed to the position of Assistant to the Director of the Smith College Museum of Art. Miss Fink was formerly Assistant to the Director of the Mills College Art Gallery, was more recently employed in the publication department of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and is currently a graduate student of the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University.

The Trustees of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston have accepted with regret the resignation of Bernard V. Bothmer, Assistant Curator of Egyptian Art, effective August 30, 1956. Dr. Bothmer has been doing research on late Egyptian sculpture in Cairo for the past two years and is director of the American Research Center there. He was general secretary of the Archeological Institute of America, and for two years secretary of the American Research Center. Since completing his studies at the universities of Berlin and

Bonn he has excavated extensively in Egypt. Dr. Bothmer joined the Museum staff in August, 1946.

Williams College Art Department announces the following news of staff changes: Assistant Professor Frank Trapin has accepted an appointment at the same rank at Amherst College; Robert Enggass, who taught last year at Bryn Mawr and at Haverford College has accepted a two-year appointment as Assistant Professor in the absence of Professor William H. Pierson, Jr. who will be away as Executive Secretary of Lamar Dodd's Carnegie Corporation project and after that will be on sabbatical leave; H. Lee Hirsche, who has been teaching at the School of Architecture of the University of Texas and was trained under Albers at Yale, comes to Williams as Instructor in charge of all studio teaching.

Otto J. Brendel, who since 1941 has been this editor's colleague and friend at Indiana University (and for several years was an associate editor of *CAJ*) has accepted an appointment at the Department of Fine Arts and Archaeology at Columbia University starting this fall. His course offerings will be the following: Fine Art R140—Etruscan Art, FA 142—The architectural monuments of ancient Rome, FA 245—Roman painting, FA 246—Roman reliefs, FA 340—Problems in Etruscan art, FA 347—Ancient art criticism. We wish him well in this new spot and will miss him at Indiana.

Artist Teacher's Exhibitions & Activities

Recent one-man shows include a retrospective of the work of William Zorach (Art Students League) at the McNay Institute, San Antonio, Texas; Edward Winters (Cleveland Institute of Art) showing enamels at the Corning Museum; Jason Schoener of the California College of Arts and Crafts showing oils at Gump's, San Francisco; C. Earl Bradbury of the University of Illinois, a retrospective exhibition at the University, and colleague Billy Jackson showing at Milliken University, Decatur, Ill.

The University of Colorado and New York University faculties had group shows held at the Forum Gallery, New York. Faculty member Robert Russian's heroic bronze statue of Benjamin Franklin will be installed on the campus of the University of Wyoming in Laramie this year. Ralph Borge of the California College of Arts and Crafts received a Guggenheim Fellowship in painting. Jean Francksen, teacher at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, was co-winner with architect Alfred Clauss of a \$10,000 first

prize in the Alcoa competition for the best design for aluminum curtain walls.

Conrad Woods, a Chicago painter who graduated from the University of Illinois in February has been awarded the 25th annual Kate Neal Kinley Memorial Fellowship by his Alma Mater. He will use the \$1,300 grant to study and paint in San Miguel, Mexico. Woods is the first

painter in eight years to receive the award.

The American Institute of Graphic Arts' Medal went this year to Professor Ray Nash of Dartmouth College, for his outstanding contribution to the graphic arts. The Medal was presented by Alvin Eisenman, typographer of Yale University Press, and former student of Mr. Nash.

Art in College Collections

New acquisitions at Iowa State Teachers College are a Stamos watercolor, *Greek Landscape No. 3*, and a drawing by Seong Moy. Purchases from "Twenty American Printmakers," last spring's invitational show organized by George Wexler at Michigan State University, added the following to the growing print collection: *Heavy Rock* by Edmond Cassarella, *Sugar*

Breath and Soggy Eyes by Lee Chesney, *Metamorphic* by John DeMartelly, and *Presentation* by John Paul Jones. Other prints purchased during the year include a Picasso lithograph, *Faune M112*; a color lithograph by Clavé, *Nature Morte au Mortier*; and a color etching by Zao Wou Ki, *Coq d'Oiseaux*.

Exhibitions

The Forum Gallery of New York City, whose pioneering activities in the exhibiting of college art on the New York art market were described in *CAJ's* summer issue, has announced the discontinuance of its program. "The possibility of continuance," they write, "was held open until now in the hope some aid could be enlisted to join us, but unhappily the project proved too costly for us alone." Because of an error of *CAJ's* editor our article referred to the director of the Forum Gallery, Robert D. Kaufmann, as one "who had been painting more or less as an amateur for a few years." "Amateur" is a word fraught with a variety of meanings. The dichotomy of "amateur" and "professional" in sport, for example, has implications or values that are very different from those applied to artists, and when the comparison is made to the "oldest profession" it is something else again. As a painter, Robert Kaufmann may have been an amateur when we first knew his work several years ago, but his concentration of effort, his development, and his recognition have earned him the standing of a serious pro-

fessional artist. As Leslie Judd Portner wrote recently of his second one-man show, "if Kaufmann continues his present rate of growth he will be a painter to reckon with."

Summer exhibitions on Maine campuses reflected the summer influx of artists from many parts of the country. Colby College highlighted its open house day with "Artists in Maine, 1956," while the University of Maine exhibited work from the Maine Watercolor Society. By way of contrast, Bowdoin College Gallery showed "The Art of French Children."

250 works dating from the 15th to 20th centuries were included in "Pictures Collected by Yale Alumni" shown at the Yale University Art Gallery in the early summer.

Eyecatching 1956-67 catalogs of extension services and traveling exhibitions are available from AFA, 1083 Fifth Ave., New York 28, New York, and the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service, Washington 25, D.C. Immaculate Heart College, Los Angeles, Calif., will circulate 11 travelling exhibitions this year. No rental fee.

BOOK REVIEWS

Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype*, Ralph Manheim, Bollingen Series, XLVII, xlv + 352 pp., 185 pl., New York: Pantheon Books, 1955. \$7.50.

Under the general term "the great mother" Eric Neumann, a Jungian psychologist, has recorded a vast number of mythological, religious, folkloristic, and art symbols of cultures and countries all over the world. Patterning his approach after Frazer's *Golden Bough*, the author makes extensive use of similarities, parallels and the developmental method in the organization of his material. The result is a monumental compilation of symbols of The Great Feminine Archetype in all her manifestations with numerous mythology, etymology, art, and anthropology references, and including a splendid collection of one hundred eighty five plates of sculpture and painting relating to this subject.

In Jungian analytical psychology an Archetype is a primordial or nuclear image laid down in the unconscious mind of man as a result of endless recurrences of similar and typical human experiences. It is an eternally present content in the collective unconscious, i.e., the universal human unconscious. As a symbol or mythological motif, it can appear equally well in the theology of Egypt or the Hellenistic mysteries of Mithra, in the Christian symbolism of the Middle Ages or the vision of a modern psychotic.

According to Neumann, the origin of the Archetypal Feminine is in the Uroboros (Gr: tail-chewer; the tail-biting snake of the Greeks) state of the unconscious. This is the psychic state of the beginning in which man's consciousness and ego are still small and undeveloped. In this initial stage, male and female, positive and negative, hostile and friendly elements are intermingled. Thus, it is the undifferentiated primordial archet-

type out of which crystallize The Great Mother and The Great Father.

From the Uroboric Great Mother there evolve images of the Good Mother, the Terrible Mother and the Great Mother, the latter encompassing within her orbit the characteristics of both the former. Finally, by the unconscious mechanism of "projection," these archetypal images are shifted from the unconscious into the outside world in the form of art symbol, mythological motif or religious theme. Thus, Sophia is an example of the Good Mother; Gorgon, the projection of the Terrible Mother; and Isis, the projection of all three—Good Mother, Terrible Mother and Great Mother. A "demon" or a "benevolent" goddess, although an imaginary creation of the man to whom it appears, is regarded by him as being present and active in the outside world.

The central symbolism of the feminine archetype is the vessel or pot. The author considers that from the very beginning to the latest stages of development this symbol is the essence of the feminine (a number of plates of clay vessels from different cultures illustrate his point). The basic symbolic equation woman = body = vessel is based on mankind's most elementary experience. Woman is the nourishing vessel that provides the unborn as well as the born with food and drink. From the food, drink and seed put into it, something is "born," making it the seat of a great series of creative functions—gestation, birth, elimination, lactation, perspiration, and the giving forth of breath and the word. Then, in due time, all body openings—eyes, ears, nose, mouth, navel (the original intrauterine mouth), rectum, genital zone and skin—as places of exchange between the inside and the outside—become invested with fascinating, terrible, overpowering and eventually divine attributes.

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"projects" his feelings related to the body vessel into the three regions of the world, the heavens above, the earth on which he lives and the dark space below—the underworld. Thus, the sky above, the coffin or grave below and the cave, house or ship on the earth's or ocean's surface become symbols of the archetypal feminine. Another symbolic series deriving from the breasts of the woman-vessel consists of bowl, cup, grail, chalice. The fact that these symbols are open in character and form, accent the idea of giving and donating, while their contents, milk, honey, water, rain, dew, intoxicants, and soma accent the life-giving feminine liquid. Only when we consider the whole scope of the basic feminine function—the giving of life, nourishment, warmth, and protection—can we understand why the Feminine Archetype occupies so central a position in human symbolism and why from the very beginning it bears the character of "greatness."

The central vessel symbol is followed developmentally, on the one hand, by negative characteristics such as holding fast, ensnaring or death; on the other hand, by the characteristics of releasing, bearing, birth, giving. By means of a process of transformation, the above objective characteristics may be transformed into subjective ones. The positive releasing and nurturing characteristics are transformed or sublimated into ecstasy, inspiration, vision, wisdom, rebirth, immortality and then into mythological or religious figures such as Sophia, Muse, Diana of Ephesus, Mary, the Virgin, Demeter, or the Holy Mother. The negative characteristics of holding fast, deprivation, or rejection are transformed into sickness, extinction, dismemberment, stupor, impotence, madness, or projected onto corresponding goddesses such as Kali, Hecate, Medusa, witch, Astarte, Lilith, i.e., symbols or avatars of the Terrible Mother (innumerable examples of sculpture and painting in the plates illustrate these symbolic figures).

From the point of view of modern depth psychology and our understanding

of unconscious mental processes, many of Neumann's explanations and descriptions regarding the formation of symbols are valid and remain lucid under close scrutiny. For example, the process of "projection," whereby an idea or impulse, especially an undesirable one, is unconsciously ascribed to something or someone outside oneself is now a commonly accepted fact. But when the author's explanation of the origin of the Archetypal Feminine is scrutinized, no such clarity is apparent. Just how the Uroboros—the "Archetype *an sich*"—forms in each individual and how out of it evolves the Archetypal Feminine (as well as the Archetypal Male) remains a shadowy portrayal. The evolution of the Terrible Mother from the elementary "containing" characteristic of the Archetypal Feminine, by way of her negative ensnaring, devouring and dismemberment characteristic is explained in even vaguer terms. Freudian psychology, on the other hand, in dealing with this mythological phenomena offers an explanation, which, though no more acceptable to certain types of minds than is Jungian theory, does hold up under actual critical inspection. Extensive investigation of the development of childhood thinking leads the psychoanalyst to conclude that weaning is a traumatic event of lesser or greater degree. From this situation develop aggressive and destructive impulse which are then projected onto the mother, making her a cruel, sadistic terrible Mother. Unconsciously she is now thought of as dangerous and ferocious, and symbolized by the figure of Kali, Rangda, Coatlicue, Gorgon, or the devouring witch of fairy tales whose exploits are read with sheer delight by children all over the world. As to the origin of the sexually undifferentiated Uroboros, here again, psychoanalytic theory, which considers each individual as possessing biologically both feminine and masculine characteristics, with a predominance of one or the other depending upon the sex, offers a more plausible explanation. This can actually be demon-

strated by the embryologist in the evolving cellular organism. From an original predisposition to bisexuality there develops in normal individuals a monosexuality leaving only slight remnants of the other sex.

Practically all the author's theories carry the stamp of alchemy and mysticism and his interpretations of the copious mythological, anthropological and art material have a cabalistic flavor. Nevertheless, the reviewer considers this book of value for the interested reader who can discriminate between fact and fancy.

JACQUES SCHNIER
University of California
Berkeley

Robert Henry Welker, *Birds and Men: American Birds in Science, Art, Literature, and Conservation, 1800-1900*, 230 pp., 40 ill., Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955. \$5.75.

Just as Benjamin Franklin is a symbol of American science, Audubon is a symbol of American ornithology. He is more than that: he has become a symbol of Romanticism and, since his inclusion in the notable exhibition of American Romantic Painting held by the Museum of Modern Art, he has become a Romantic forerunner of the work of Price and Graves. Audubon and his work are the core of Mr. Welker's book, *Birds and Men*, an account of the point of view towards birds as expressed in science, art, literature, and conservation.

The early chapters in this book—through page 90, to be precise—deal with the first reports of birds in the New World and their representation in painting, and are particularly interesting to students of American art. As Mr. Welker points out, the work of all the early illustrators, Mark Catesby, Alexander Wilson, and the rest, finds a culmination in Audubon's contribution, which Cuvier described as "the most magnificent monument yet raised to ornithology." As a "proto-Romantic" record of the world of birds, the work of Catesby and Wilson

has something of the archaic charm of the first American attempts at landscape by Ralph Earle and the young John Vanderlyn: it is just as much painting of "marvels" or "mirabilia" as Zoffany's records of the South Seas. Mr. Welker's treatment of Wilson as an artist is fair and interesting, as is his handling of the Audubon-Wilson controversy.

Audubon himself represents a strange dichotomy which is often to be noted in the early nineteenth century, a Romantic artist expressing himself in a Classical framework—as the author puts it, with a "Classical control." That expression in relief and carefully demarcated planes, he notes, may derive from the artist's brief association with Jacques Louis David. At the same time, Audubon is the pictorial embodiment of ideas expressed by the Romantic writers: "the American Woodsman," like "the Noble Savage," was an emblem of Nature, the exotic Nature of the New World, unspoiled and beautiful. The birds were the inhabitants of that mysterious realm of forest, savannah, and bayou.

The chapter devoted to Audubon as an artist begins with a rather superficial summary of Oriental bird painting that manages to miss the one essential feature of Chinese art, the instillation of life or animation appropriate to expressing the specific vitality and life movement of living creatures, the suggestion of the dynamic inner life and articulation peculiar to the thing represented as a revelation of the ever-renewed creative process of Nature. Audubon was an artist who had become so identified with the birds and the vanished American wilderness they inhabited that in an intuitive romantic way he was able to confer on them something of the personality peculiar to the species, so that, like Oriental painting, his subjects have a dramatic aliveness and heroic quality that transcends mere literal transcription. The review of Audubon's predecessors both in Europe and America, although perforce rather cursory, has many perceptive comments. Perhaps because this book is primarily directed to

"non-artistic" readers, the author permits himself such an obvious comment as the statement that "ornithological illustrations during the Middle Ages were done entirely by hand."

The point of this survey is really to demonstrate that in Western art the idea of representing birds for their own sake is only to be found with the development of ornithology, "the study and correlation of the facts about birds." With the exception of Audubon, one feels that all the men whom Mr. Welker discusses were ornithologists first, and artists second. The greatest service rendered science by Wilson and Audubon was to rid ornithology of the ridiculous anthropomorphism of Buffon, just as in painting their vitalized birds in appropriate settings replaced the medieval symbols of their predecessors.

In its limited specialty this is a good and useful book. The analysis of Audubon's predecessors in ornithological illustration is particularly good, as is the account of Audubon's own technique, although one might find fault with terms like "dry watercolor" to describe Audubon's use of dry brushwork. The author's account of the charges against plagiarizing from Wilson and, for floral accessories, from Joseph Mason is also particularly valuable. One wonders why, however, the writer did not make use of Alice Ford's *Audubon's Butterflies, Moths, and Other Studies*, a work that casts a great deal of light on Audubon's collaboration with Mason and Maria Martin.

Something more might have been said of Audubon's hybrid technique and practice, revealed by some of the originals in the New York Historical Society, of leaving the landscapes of some subjects like the Roseate Spoonbill to be finished by Havell. Perhaps this omission is to be explained by the fact that the author was working from the prints rather than the watercolors.

The illustrations in this book are particularly bad. They are printed in small size in an unpleasant sepia tone and, arranged as they are as so many small

vignettes on a single plate, they give the unhappy impression of cuts for an old-fashioned mail-order sales catalogue. The poor quality of the Audubon reproductions may be explained partly by the fact that they were made, as the author rather proudly states, from the reproductions of prints published by Macmillan in 1946.

The remaining chapters of the book deal with birds in nineteenth-century literature and the history of conservation. The sections on the writing of Thoreau, Emerson, Burroughs, and Whitman are extremely interesting accounts of the nineteenth-century point of view of man's place in nature and the love of nature as a means towards a better life. Again, the employment of birds as echoes of human sentiments by Whitman might be regarded as a forecast of the psychic role of birds in Morris Graves. None of these writers parallel the work of the artists who were scientists with Romantic overtones. Only Whitman in the accuracy of his scientific observation—and that always subordinated to poetry—approaches the scientific detachment of the ornithologist or the bird painter.

The final section on the development of conservation may be recommended as a magisterial treatment of the initial destruction and ultimate preservation of American birds. Altogether the author is to be congratulated on his presentation of an aspect of America that has its great importance for the development of both art and science in the nineteenth century.

BENJAMIN ROWLAND, JR.
Harvard University

Encyclopedia of Painting: Painters and Painting of the World from Prehistoric Times to the Present Day, ed. Bernard S. Myers, 512 pp., 1000 ill. (216 in color), New York: Crown Publishers, 1955. \$10.95.

Dictionary of Modern Painting, ed. Fernand Hazan, 328 pp., 350 ill. (270 in color), New York: Paris Book Center, n.d. \$6.50.

One wonders if these two publications presage a deluge of specialized dictionaries and encyclopedias. Doubtless there is a need for concise, authoritative reference books, not only for small libraries, but also as rapid reference works for students and scholars. Also in this age of \$64,000 programs such books may well be more than worth their weight in gold. Publishers will find them profitable, and particularly because of this, each new offering should be appraised with care.

Books of reference to be worthy must be: first, sufficiently inclusive; secondly, reliable factually, and; thirdly, authoritative in judgment. The *Encyclopedia of Painting* is sufficiently inclusive, though one questions the omission of some more recent artists in favor of obscurities like Vincenzo Tamagna and Michele di Matteo. The factual accuracy is usually satisfactory. Errors occur, however, even in the articles on Raphael (who was not born in Perugia) and Michelangelo (whose *Last Judgment* is not on the altar wall). Let the reader beware! A serious lack is the general omission of birthplaces. The greatest deficiency of the *Encyclopedia*, however, is in the realm of authoritative judgment, primarily in the articles on European painters of the 18th and 19th centuries. This deficiency is not easily documented by a selection of quotations because it often depends upon the tone of an entire entry, or on what is included and what is left out, as in the notice of Angelica Kauffmann, which is brief enough to quote as a whole.

"A Neo-Classical German painter very popular in her day. She was influenced to a great extent by the theories of Wincklemann (*sic*), who turned her to painting insipid classical allegories. She is perhaps more interesting to the student of eighteenth-century life, especially in her involvement with a footman who posed as a count."

"Neo-Classical" unmodified is a poor characterization of Angelica's art, as is "German" of the nationality of this Swiss-born woman who lived some 30 years in Italy and 15 in London. The next sentence implies that classical allegories in general are insipid. Angelica

is interesting to students of 18th century life because of her association with the important people of the day and her acceptance, first, as an infant prodigy and then as a female artist, not because of her "involvement" (marriage) with a swindler.

The entry on Greuze begins: "Most misunderstood artist in the history of French painting. Even in his own day he was misunderstood by the critic Diderot who extolled the moral virtues of his titillating canvases and by a wife who dispensed her favors on the side."

A lack of judgment extends also into ambiguous generalizations of artists' work. On Millet one reads: "His colors are tonal and rather muddy, the total style academic in the nineteenth-century sense." Regarding David one learns: "His most classic subjects, such as the Oath of the Horatii, exhibit primitive disco-ordinated compositions that are not classic."

The *Dictionary of Modern Painting* is a handbook which one feels is reliable both for facts and judgments, with only the modicum of errors which one tolerates in a new publication, such as "1929" instead of 1925 for the year when the Bauhaus moved to Dessau and Manet's birthdate as "1823" instead of 1832. The book, however, is by no means as inclusive as its name implies, nor does it live up to its claims "to include complete information on every aspect of modern painting throughout the world." It is a "dictionary" only because the little essays on movements and artists are arranged alphabetically, an arrangement probably adopted to facilitate the combining of articles by many different critics. Despite the lack of historical continuity, this publication is actually a history of the modern movement in painting. Very likely it will gain some acceptance as a text-book in courses on modern art (roughly from Manet to the present).

The choice of artists treated is arbitrary: for example, Guys (b. 1802) and Jongkind (b. 1819) are included while Courbet (b. 1819) is not. There is an article on Whistler, but none on Sargent.

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Entries are dedicated to Fantin-Latour, Lepine, Monticelli, and Puvis de Chavannes, but the great popular artists like Meissonier and Bouguereau are never mentioned. The bias of the *Dictionary* is made evident by a perusal of the American entries: Cassatt, Feininger, Marin, Stieglitz, Leo and Gertrude Stein, Whistler and the Armory Show.

Neither publication attempts to give bibliographical references which would lead the reader to further knowledge on the subjects which interest him. Both are profusely illustrated in an off-set process. The illustrations in the *Dictionary*, mostly in color, are well-chosen to accompany the text. The choice of illustrations in the *Encyclopedia*, many of which are in color, is more fortuitous. In fact, by its lavish use of illustrations and its useless entries on museums, the *Encyclopedia* proclaims itself at first perusal a merely commercial publication. This is too bad, for there exists a need for a work of this scope, which the *Encyclopedia* could fulfill if carefully re-edited. There is much that is good in the book.

G. HAYDN HUNTLEY
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Harold E. Wethey, *Alonso Cano: Painter, Sculptor, Architect*, ix + 227 pp., 167 ill., Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955. \$15.00.

If the very substantial achievement of Alonso Cano as painter, sculptor, architect, and decorative designer has been overlong in receiving adequate recognition, Dr. Wethey has amply atoned for the delay in this handsome volume. To a greater extent than most artists, Cano has been the victim of uncritical legends and casual attributions. Due to recent research, the additional documentation now available has necessitated a revision of his early work especially as well as a more discriminating approach to questions of authenticity, sources, and development of style. But hitherto no comprehensive investigation of his considerable *oeuvre* has been undertaken.

Professor Wethey has presented his material in an attractive manner of interest to the general reader while at the same time he satisfies the requirements of exacting scholarship. After a brief summary of the more striking reasons which make Cano significant and worthy of study, his biography is given and a number of misconceptions of long standing are cleared up. Something of a universal genius in the Renaissance fashion, Cano was pre-eminent as a sculptor but although relatively little of his work is now extant, there is yet ample to demonstrate its high quality. Cano's paintings are next considered, in Seville, Madrid, Granada, and the last years. The recognition of his ability as an architect has suffered because of the destruction of his masterpiece: perhaps he is known now chiefly for the façade of Granada Cathedral.

From Cano's early period in Seville, more sculpture and retables than paintings have survived, although still only a small fraction of his output. Some of these were executed jointly with his father, some independently, and many of his favorite motifs may be noted thus early in his career. The high altar at Lebrija, in its way a revolution in architectural design with its single colossal order topped by a large attic storey, quickly established Cano's name. The sculpture of this retable was equally splendid and the Madonna and Child, his finest creation. Of other existing retables, La Campana was eclipsed in fame by Sta. Paula, his only surviving altarpiece in Seville and more fully Baroque in style. Various Madonnas and Saints further attest his ability even in this early phase. From the years in Madrid, there seems to be little sculpture, but back once more in his native Granada, he again undertook projects which included figures and ornament. Perhaps best known is a youthful and charming *Inmaculada*, new in Spanish art in its form as delicate and rippling as rococo. It constituted a norm in Granada for half a century. For the same lectern, he later carved the so-called "Madonna of

Bethlehem," of exquisite design and modeling. Even more impressive are the large figures for the church of the Convento del Angel: "St. Joseph" and the two Franciscans are among the greatest achievements of Spanish sculpture. "St. Paul" and other saints adorning Granada Cathedral exemplify the marked contraposto he came to favor.

Alonso Cano's talent as a painter became apparent early in his stay in Seville, where almost inevitably he was influenced by the tenebrism of the young Velázquez. Although traces of Mannerism remain, yet the serious, even sombre, mood and the drama restrained by a sense of dignity strike a characteristic Spanish note. Of this early group, "St. Agnes" (a casualty of 1945) was probably the loveliest, in its accomplished design and a clear sharp perfection almost Florentine. In 1638, Cano went to Madrid, where he was befriended by Olivares, and the following year saw his first royal commission, a portrait of Ferdinand and Queen Isabel. Of lasting importance was his opportunity here to examine earlier masters, particularly the Venetians, a study which had a profound influence on his style and types for the next twenty years. The altars at Getafe reveal this, as well as an increasingly Baroque spirit; of certain date, they are helpful in establishing a sequence in this eclectic phase. His contemporaries greatly admired his "Miracle of the Well" which most clearly shows the influence of Velázquez, and another of this time, "St. Dominic's Miraculous Portrait," is similar in its approach, while "Christ supported by an Angel" in the Prado suggests a knowledge of Rubens.

Aged 51, Cano went to Granada Cathedral, where he designed ecclesiastical objects for the Canons in addition to his sculpture and painting. The latter includes scenes from the Life of the Virgin, which extended over several years. The "Presentation of the Virgin" shows spaciousness in its architectural setting and grandeur of conception to a degree unusual in the Spanish School. This series is without parallel in Spanish

painting in its unity of purpose, and significance of form and dramatic motivation. A number of projects for the Franciscans belong to this period, probably Cano's best, as he had outgrown his eclecticism, so it is particularly unfortunate that so many have been lost. "S. Bernardino and S. Juan Capistrano" from the Franciscan monastery are masterly in the emotional depth of their characterization. Throughout his work there are Madonnas, pleasing in type and attractive in color like most of Cano's painting. An *Inmaculada* from the oratory in Granada Cathedral is notable among these in its breadth and repose and superb decorative effect. This is the culmination of the contemplative tradition of the Madonnas of Seville, thoughtful, demure, with downcast eyes, much more satisfactory than the type Murillo was later to popularize. From a short stay in Málaga, the great "Madonna of the Rosary" is the only survivor and Cano's finest group composition.

A seventeenth century master, Cano was yet idealistic and conservative in his love for the beauty of line and the charm of color which he never wholly sacrificed to the dramatic effects of tenebrism although his was characteristic of certain paintings especially of the Seville days. But in Madrid with the many fine paintings there available, especially the Venetians, a divided allegiance is soon unmistakable and a growing readiness to profit by the lessons they taught. The Baroque becomes more evident in his methods of composition and concepts of space, as well as in a mounting mystic emotionalism which culminated in the scenes from the Life of the Virgin in Granada.

The work of Cano as an architect has never before received an impartial evaluation but only the extremes of opinion which any consideration of Baroque uses to evoke. Of his early manner, some idea may be gained from his fine designs for such architectural elements as altarpieces and retables, or a triumphal arch or wall fountain, restrained and sober in treatment and already employing decorative

motifs and forms which came to characterize his work. Cano's major building, the church of the Convento del Angel, was destroyed in the Napoleonic wars, but there is good reason to believe that the church of the Magdalen in the same city follows the design of the Angel Custodio church rather closely. The façade of Granada Cathedral was not completed until long after Cano's lifetime, and the building had to be adapted to Silóe's foundations. But in spite of the originality of Cano's design which impressed his contemporaries, today it seems quiet indeed for Baroque but Spanish in such features as the triumphal arch disposition of the façade and Cano in many of the details of ornament.

Cano's artistic affiliations are of considerable interest for they include a period of study under Pacheco with Velázquez as friend and fellow pupil, while his sculpture seems to prove a close association with Martínez Montañés. Several of Cano's pupils and followers had a certain importance, such as the architect Sebastián de Herrera Barnuevo, the sculptors Pedro de Mena and José de Mora, and the painters Juan de Sevilla, Bocanegra and José Risueño.

The book's scholarly equipment is complete and well arranged. The bibliography and footnotes must include all known references. The catalogue gives a full description of each authentic work. There are grouped under altars and ecclesiastical objects; paintings (mostly religious, including the portraits); sculpture; paintings by Cano's followers; references to lost paintings; attributions (both in painting and sculpture); and prints after Cano. The chronology of documents furnishes the necessary confirmation and those connected with his sojourn in the cathedral of Granada especially add a convincingly human touch. The convenience of the indices makes research a pleasure.

Dr. Wethey has been at no small pains to determine what actually was Cano's authentic signature, and photographs of all known genuine examples plus a com-

parison with some which are not so, should make unconsidered attributions a thing of the past. The generous illustrations have been expertly photographed, many by Mrs. Wethey, and no doubt it was wise to adhere to a scheme of black and white. This welcome study is a very considerable contribution to the growing number of scholarly monographs in the field of Spanish art.

WALTER W. S. COOK
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Alma Reed, *Orozco*, viii + 308 pp., 32 ill., New York: Oxford University Press, 1956. \$6.00.

This book contains indispensable source material towards a definitive biography of José Clemente Orozco. There is no one more qualified than Alma Reed to cover Orozco's long sojourn (1928-1934) in the United States. Besides, it is good reading and the story rings true from the author's first meeting with the artist in his tiny New York studio, to their adieu at the Chicago Terminal as he returned to Mexico.

Orozco emerges clearly out of such unassuming and expert reportage, but as a man constrained and caged by the unfamiliar, and on the whole inimical, milieu. At first, poor and puzzled, the artist could bear rather well, due to similar past brushes with loneliness, the incomprehension of his art, and occasional hunger. Later on, when he was accepted as a master, other distractions came his way that were the irksome price he had to pay for his American fame: there were dealers keen at horse-trading, potential patrons to be humored, occasional speeches, and worst of all in his estimation, the taming and tipping of uniformed doormen. As he rose to acclaim, Orozco stored enough fuel of resentment to power throughout the rest of his life many a bitter masterpiece.

Within this already strange milieu, passing strange must have seemed to him his well-wishers. "Little angel"—his nickname for the author—was one of a chapel

of dedicated ladies, shod in open sandals and clad in hand-woven linens of Grecian cut. Delphi, famed home of antique mysteries, remained for them the *omphalos*, or naval, of the world. The members' pantheon was a crowded one, what with Jesus and Buddha, Mithra and Walt Whitman, Gandhi and Zoroaster. To put Orozco at ease, the Mexican Quetzalcoatl was courteously assimilated. The painter was "baptized" a Greek—with a new name: *Panselenos*—and fitted with a crown of live laurels. When I visited him in his tiny Chelsea apartment I noticed the dried-up wreath, but the artist was not loquacious about it.

Delphic ideals notwithstanding, Alma Reed proved a determined and tireless executive in behalf of the master, who was both too retiring and too explosive for sustained and sound human contacts. The goal she set forth for him was success as a New Yorker envisions it. This success would be measured in terms of newspaper clippings—two, three, or four, columns wide—of strategic hangings in group shows, of successful lobbying for museum representation. Substantial private collectors would be hunted and captured, and, of course, a Hearst paper sued for defamation. Indeed, moves as tough as these were needed to crash art circles practically synonymous with the art market.

The frank and detailed retelling of this tactical campaign paradoxically makes a story free of meanness or selfishness. It proved to be a heroic effort against odds, that blends well with the heroism of Orozco's themes and style. What halloed this practical endeavour, besides the generous motive, is that its story is not one of unalloyed success. Some of the deep drama of Mexico, with Orozco as the catalyser, infused, despite the hopes of his benefactress, this otherwise typically American adventure.

Orozco was a muralist. In Mexico, he had freely spread of his heart and his gall on eighteenth century patio walls framed in noble arcades, tiered high, and scaled generously, as if awaiting since they were

built the heroic lime-skin of the future frescos. Orozco conceived his work on a scale, and of an orchestral complexity, that could hardly fit the Procrustean bed: dealers' velvet-lined walls, collectors' panelled rooms, museums' storage racks. Alma Reed could not quite turn the tide of Northern indifference. The best informed among the men she approached conceived of murals as watered versions of the pale renderings of Puvis de Chavannes. Orozco's noisy frescos would not do.

As with Gauguin and Van Gogh, the villains of this play were art connoisseurs. Astonishingly, its heroes were College Presidents and Professors who proffered walls, braving incensed trustees, aroused local societies, and the resulting adverse publicity. It seems that Orozco was left quite free to paint what he pleased. That no money was forthcoming as a fee for these gigantic chores was hardly worth a second thought. Again seated on a scaffold, again in coveralls spattered with lime, at last out of reach of dealers and salons, the Mexican felt sane again.

This story of Orozco in the United States is the heart of the book. To live up to its inclusive title, its scope extends over the full biographical span, from birth to death, but these added chapters may be afterthoughts. They lack the authentic fire with which Alma Reed testifies about events in which she was an active participant. In Orozco's own view, his stay in the United States was perhaps little more than an awkward, if prolonged, interlude. In the book, the change of pace and interest queers the all-over balance. The reader is left with the idea that, neglected at home, the master found refuge and fame in a foreign land. Facts are otherwise: a first extensive appreciation and praise of Orozco was published by José Juan Tablada in 1913. In 1923, he successfully climaxed a campaign to give walls to Orozco, in itself a tale fully as exciting as the one Alma Reed tells so feelingly.

Who could blame the author for being confused with the marches and counter-

marches, the frays between top dogs and underdogs that churned throughout the Revolution? When she mentions "the Zapata epoch, when the artists and other followers of Obregon abandoned Mexico City for Orizaba," only a well-informed reader will make out that Orozco left with the troops sent to fight Zapata. The painter of the famous picture, "Zapatistas," now in the Museum of Modern Art, and of the equally formidable "Zapata"—that Alma Reed extolls as the heroic portrait of a hero—contacted his models only as they were brought in daily as prisoners, and shot. The author states that these pictures are "an eloquent reaffirmation of Orozco's revolutionary convictions." What is meant as straightforward praise remains probably true, in the sense that strain, and stress, and turmoil, were the main motors of Orozco's inspiration, and thus a justification *per se* of the Revolution.

Similar simplifications are attempted on the religious plane. Even in his lustiest anti-clerical days, filled with the sport of priest-baiting and church-sacking, Orozco never pretended to moral or philosophical originality. When the free-thinking plebs he had fought for came on top and launched a religious persecution, the painter, in a typically bold turn-about, frescoed pious incidents from the life of Saint Francis. Alma Reed extolls the pagan martyrdom of Prometheus as a supreme achievement, but the Christian martyrdoms that Orozco painted towards the last, and his noble Crucifixions, are silently bypassed.

Thus it comes as a total surprise to the reader that Don Luis Maria Martinez, famed archbishop of Mexico, would choose Orozco as his official portraitist. The stairs of the studio were many and high, and for seven sittings the aged ecclesiastic climbed them, well knowing that the painter was neither an apple-polisher nor a brush-licker. The last commission,

that death left unfinished, was for a monumental church crucifix. Either these clerical patrons—as did Father Couturier in France—prized genius over faith, or else and more probably, being themselves Mexican, they allowed for tantrums between a child and his mother, be it his Mother the Church.

In Mexico, even a word can hold complex inuendoes. *El Atoron*, the name of a *pulqueria*, does not mean "a holdup." It has a double meaning, a device dear to Mexican popular wit, and, as well, to the Indian sense of caution. *Atorarse* means to fill up on good food, to stuff oneself. It also means to choke, as one chokes on a bone, and perhaps chokes to death. *El Atoron* being a place where one, or both, of these things may happen, the client has been briefed on all eventualities.

The reader who wishes to study Orozco's stylistic evolution from the sixteen plates at hand should be aware of some loose dating in the captions. Otherwise, the stylistic chasm between "House of Tears," correctly dated 1915, and "The Wounded," dated here as of 1916, will prove sorely puzzling. Not one year, but a decade, separates the evanescent tints of the early watercolor from the aggressive value contrasts of the field-hospital scene. In the *College Art Journal*, IX, 1949-50, pp. 148-157, I published the exhaustive documentation that is the key to this stylistic puzzle: none of the wash-drawings of the Revolution are contemporary with the events they depict. They were conceived after the first frescos were painted, which explains the monumental emphasis. The series was begun in September 1926, and finished at the end of 1928, when Orozco, in his small flat on West 23rd Street, washed a few replicas of earlier motifs to please New York patrons.

JEAN CHARLOT
University of Hawaii

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LETTER OF PROTEST

Dresden: Wie es war

(The original of the following letter was longer and more detailed than what is printed below, containing by implication aspersions against Allied policies during the Second World War. The latter have been excluded because it is against the editorial policy of the COLLEGE ART JOURNAL to print them.—Ed.)

Sir:

I wish to protest against the review of *Dresden: wie es war* by J. P. Hodin of London in your Spring 1956 (XV.3) issue, page 285. It is both false and shameful: false because of its flagrant misstatements of facts, and shameful because it seeks to utilize these misstatements in order to justify what cannot be justified.

J. P. Hodin says that Dresden's former fame as a centre of art and music "was fatefully cut short in 1933." He had just mentioned Mary Wigman's school of the dance at Dresden, and implies that it too was "cut short in 1933." The tenth edition of Degener's *Wer ist's?*, published in 1935, lists Mary Wigman as still "Leiterin d. Wigman-Zentralschule," gives her address as Dresden-N.6,

Bautzener Strasse 107, states that she went on dance tours in Germany in 1933, and founded a new dance group in 1934. These facts give the lie to J. P. Hodin's implication that Mary Wigman ceased her dance activities on Hitler's advent to power. Another cultural activity at Dresden that was not "cut short in 1933" was initial performances of Richard Strauss operas. Just as *Salome*, *Elektra*, and *Der Rosenkavalier* were first performed at Dresden in 1905, 1909, and 1911 respectively, so the following Strauss operas were first performed there uninterruptedly between the two world wars: *Intermezzo* (1924), *Die ägyptische Helena* (1928), *Arabella* (1933), *Die schweigsame Frau* (1935), and *Daphne* (1938). Similarly, the famous Dresden porcelain was produced and sold there as much before as after 1933, as I myself saw during visits to Dresden in 1928, 1931 and 1933.

Mr. Hodin says that Dresden was completely destroyed by the Allies in 1945 "owing to the underground hangars built there before the war and to the practice of the Nazis, contrary to all international law, to use churches and old monumental

buildings for military purposes." If there were any underground hangars they were certainly not *in* Dresden but *outside* of it. The military uses to which Hodin accuses the Nazis of putting churches and old monumental buildings are left conveniently vague. He was presumably not in Dresden in February, 1945, and could not have known.

Continuing his misstatements, Hodin seeks further to palliate the aerial bombings of Dresden by saying: "It is historically just to mention here that Frederick the Great, the king of Prussia, laid the town in ruins in 1760 and that only Canaletto's etchings give us an idea of its previous grandeur." Here the implication is that Frederick did as much damage to Dresden in 1760 as the Allied air forces did in 1945, which is a grotesque exaggeration. First of all, any child knows that the power of explosives in the eighteenth century was much less than in the mid-twentieth, and Frederick could use only cannon on the ground level. Secondly, Belotto-Canaletto's paintings and etchings of Dresden done before 1760 show the Zwinger (1711-22), the Frauenkirche (1726-43) and the Hofkirche (1739-56) in exactly the same state they were in after 1760 and until 1945, proving that none of them were harmed by Frederick's cannon. There was therefore little "previous grandeur" destroyed by Frederick which is alone preserved in Belotto-Canaletto's pictures. The latter are fully illustrated in Hellmuth Fritzsche's *Bernardo Belotto genannt Canaletto* (Burg bei Magd., 1936), to which J. P. Hodin and those of his readers he may have misled may be referred as proof of the foregoing statements. It is true that the destruction at Dresden shocked Goethe when he

visited there in 1768 (*Dichtung und Wahrheit*, II.8), but actually the only important building that Frederick's cannon destroyed was the tower of the Kreuzkirche, which dated from the sixteenth century. Belotto-Canaletto, who lived in Dresden from 1747 to 1766, shows this tower both before and after it was damaged. See Hellmuth Fritzsche's book mentioned above, Plates 63 and 71. It is significant that in the picture of the damaged tower all the adjacent buildings are intact. The Kreuzkirche as it stood until 1945 was an almost wholly modern structure, having been rebuilt after a fire in 1897, although Hodin, faithful in error to the end, lists it as an early building with the Zwinger and the Frauenkirche.

One is glad to report that the obituaries of Hodin and others upon Dresden are premature. For, despite the truly appalling devastation, the city like others in Germany has been in the course of reconstruction since the war. Early in April, 1956, the Press announced that in the following June there would be celebrated in Dresden the city's 750th anniversary (it is first mentioned in a document of 1206). This occasion will be marked by the re-installation of all the superb paintings, including Raphael's Sistine Madonna (in a room by itself), in the reconstructed picture gallery, by the re-opening of the rebuilt Opera House, a magnificent modern building designed by Gottfried Semper, and the completion of repairs on the Zwinger, the Hofkirche and other important buildings. Thus Mr. Hodin may dry his crocodile tears over Dresden.

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PERSONNEL ADDENDA:

Charles H. Sawyer has left Yale University to become director of the University of Michigan Museum of Art. Harris Prior, formerly director of Munson-Williams-Proctor, Utica, becomes director of The American Federation of Arts on December

1, succeeding Thomas Messer, who will take a post in Boston. Sam Hunter, recently lecturer on art at Barnard College, has been appointed Associate Curator in Painting and Sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art.